# TRUE WEST

ALL TRUE — ALL FACT — STORIES OF THE REAL WEST

February, 25¢

## Buffalo Hunt

By Dr. Walter Prescott Webb

The first one ever photographed?

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•

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•

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•

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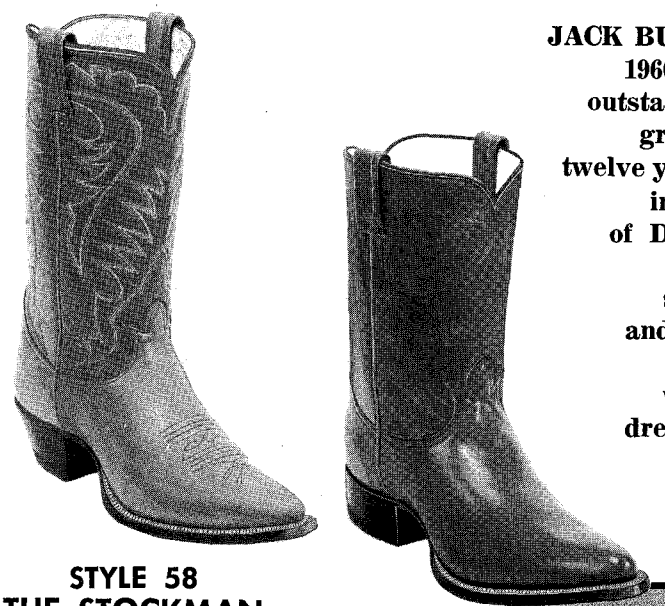

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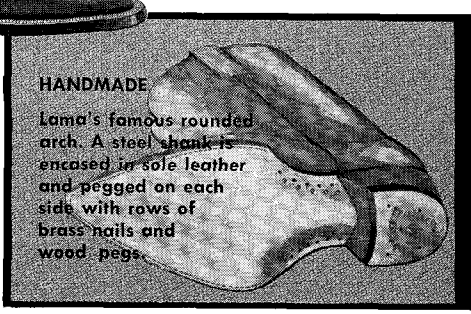


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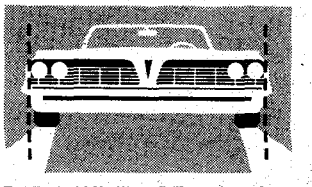

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## Regarding

# *One More Time*

THIS MUST be a hurried world. Maybe "harried" would be the word. Anyhow, when a person who has been planning all year on sending out gift subscriptions to True West and Frontier Times at Christmas time and then doesn't have time to sit down, fill out some blanks, lick a stamp and sign a check—well, you're getting as rushed as we are, folks, and that isn't good!

Now about the gift rates. So many of you want to help us, solve your gift problems and bring a little trash—I mean, literature—into the lives of your friends that we'd feel like "promise-much-do-little" politicians if we didn't hold the gift rates open a little longer. But we got to close it sometime. This issue will be out and circulating until the end of February, 1961. So let's make that the deadline. After all, we can hardly make an offer in a publication without honoring it until that magazine is off sale.

One thought I'd like to put across without seeming to brag. Oh, all right—let me brag a word or two. I've cried on your shoulders for seven long years. If a man can still brag once in seven years while his kids are wearing holey underwear, maybe it's good for his something-or-other!

As I was saying, Dr. Walter Prescott Webb, ex-president of the American Historical Association (without being payolaed, threatened, cajoled, or even begged) wrote us in part: "I have watched your remarkable progress with interest, and I know of no publications on the American West that make more appeal to a great variety of readers, young and old.

"There is a reason for this appeal. You have hit what in mining parlance is called a 'vein'—in the language of writers, an 'angle.' *You are undertaking to tell the TRUTH about the West.* The people have responded in the way they have because they *like* the truth, and are finding it more exciting than fiction. The files of True West and Frontier Times are going to be of *great historical value* and should be preserved in all libraries of the country."

In short, you sort of like to give something of lasting value, of quality to a friend or loved one. Remember Dr. Webb said we got quality, not I! See, if I said it, that surely would be bragging!

Frankly speaking, the whole idea behind this message is to get you to send out some gift subscriptions. Wouldn't we look silly—putting out all of this quality and nobody reading it!

Thanks a whole lot. We are the top selling western interest magazines in the world now—and you did it. So be ashamed or proud, it's all your fault! So long 'til next time.—Joe.

# CHANGES OF ADDRESS

**Folks, BE SURE and give your old address as well as new when you change your address. We have a regular Scotland Yard here tracking down some of you subscribers who have moved and write in giving only your new address! Thanks!**

January-February, 1961
Volume 8, No. 3
Whole No. 43

# True West

**All True—All Fact—Stories of the Real West**

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*"The files of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES are going to be of great historical value and should be preserved in all the libraries of the country."*—Walter Prescott Webb, former President, American Historical Association.

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Cover: Joe Grandee

A "SMALL" PUBLICATION

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# ONE MORE TIME...

## We'll Extend the Special!

It's that reduced gift rate offer that we're talking about. It seems that most of you planned on taking advantage of it. However, that Holiday rush got many of you like it did us and we've received some frantic requests to extend the offer.

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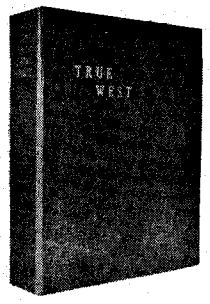


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# Truly Western

### "Shame on You!"

Dear Joe,

I have been in the TRUE WEST clan since the summer of 1953 beginning with Vol. 1, No. 1, and all my copies are bound and put away for my sons to read when they are old enough. Other magazines are simply pieces of merchandise, used and cast away afterward. Your issues are simply visits into our home by an old friend, or should I say group of friends? Perhaps other long-time readers feel this bond of friendship with you also, and that is one reason why the question of liquor advertising is so alarming.

Regardless of the fact that the magazine is a business venture and must compete with the hard, cold facts of business survival, it is something else, too. It is still your "project of a lifetime." It was made so that bank presidents could have a "Western" magazine that would not have to be hidden in a drawer, and that others of us with the same feelings as he had and as you had, can benefit from it, too.

Every time things start looking too black, go back and read your pledge from Volume 1. That wasn't a business deal—that was an act of faith. You had enough courage to deliberately go against the established rules of western printing, to dare to put into print your dream and make it succeed. Shame on you—why should you fear a second step of faith, which is no larger than the first?

That same Range Boss who heard your first pledge is still there. To prove to you that He is, may I tell you a chapter of my life that concerns the influence of your magazine toward good and evil? Read this article from the Navajo Gospel Mission prayer letter of this summer and I will tell you of this secret which only God and I knew.

### I Saw God Work—To Educate

He was such a little boy, this one whose mother had left him with his father's mother and had disappeared as soon as he was born. He had spent his time here and there with different relatives, at the Mission a bit, far up in the back country herding sheep, knowing poverty with its hunger and cold most of the time. Oh, yes, during that time at the Mission he had somehow slipped his way into camp, but had been too young to make it into school, and now—

School registration was in full swing—in a few days classes would begin. Late one evening a stately, poorly dressed, gray-haired old lady appeared with a slender, silent, shy seven year old boy. "School?" "No money even to help, and no jewelry to pawn, but perhaps from some relative. I will try, and come again," and Glen and his grandmother had slipped into the shadows and by morning were gone.

So sure were we that we had made out the preliminary blanks to save Glen a bed, but no Glen appeared and our hearts were sad.

From an opened letter there dropped a money order. The letter read somewhat like this: "I have just finished purchasing school clothes for my seven year old boy. I would give all I possess if I could do the same for my eight year old, but God has denied me that privilege for all the rest of the time here on earth. I should like to send a boy to school this year." No one remembers having talked to the woman or even in her church. How she knew of us, God holds the secret, but—"A boy?" There could be only one—

Yes, Glen was sent for and came, bringing only the clothes he wore. Now he eagerly makes progress in the Beginner's class, causing no trouble, a bit homesick (if one can judge by his eyes when grandmother comes), gentle, hungry for the affection he receives. Somewhere a hungry mother-heart should be warmed by knowing that a hungry boy-heart is being given an opportunity for an education which might never be his otherwise.—Gladys Zook

Our oldest son, just barely eight, was struck and killed by a pickup while we were on our way to visit the dentist last spring. God knew we needed something to ease the grief and loneliness in our hearts, and He knew little Glen needed "parents" to send him to school. How He brought us together is the miracle which concerns you. Years ago, in one of the very first issues of TRUE WEST, you published a letter from a reader, telling of a man, Shine Smith, who spent his life working among the Navajo. A few years later, on someone else's behalf, I had occasion to write him, asking of Christian schools on Indian reservations. Time lapsed another three or four years, then as the saved bed waited empty at the mission for Glen, God fitted the pieces of the puzzle together and performed His miracle.

As the world rushes toward its closing chapters, it will become more and more difficult to stand up and publicly defend any kind of principle. Yet it is still up to everyone to make the choice of sacrificing and fighting for what he believes in, or of following the course of least resistance.

With the help of liquor money your magazine could doubtless become as successful in business as it has been in content. But if, to make it that way, you

*(Continued on page 55)*



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# "IT'S BETTER THAN TRUE WEST!"

Watch for the Winter FRONTIER TIMES to appear right beside this issue of TRUE WEST on the shelves of your favorite newsstand! (You might even prod your dealer a little, just to make sure it gets there.) It's cram-jammed with great stories—one more word would have busted its seams! Everything is as authentic and true to life as the callouses on a rail-splitter's hands! Just look at this partial list of contents:

THE SOUL OF A SAVAGE—Taciturn, gloomy, but respected and feared by the Sioux and whites alike, Black Bull surrendered his soul, Indian-fashion, to protect the life of the German-born white woman who lived in Wyoming's wilderness.

YOU CAN HAVE THE TURKEY!—J. X. Beidler, the man who made Virginia City "a decent place to live," was one of the toughest hombres in Montana's history. Redskins, outlaws, or snowstorms couldn't stop him—but a pair of Christmas turkeys did!

PERMISSION TO MURDER—Colonel J. M. Chivington was a ninety-day wonder, Civil War style, and he made the most of his military career—by massacring helpless Indians!

RYNNING'S ROUGH RIDERS—Thirteen men dared to ride into the last stronghold of outlawdom in the West—and ride out again with the prisoners they went after.

PRINT OLIVE'S SPECIAL TICKET TO HELL—To call J. P. Olive a "barbarous savage" would have been a euphemism. He not only killed men, he invented ways to make them die slow, lingering deaths.

THE MUSSEL SLOUGH TRAGEDY—Railroads were big business, and farming was small business when it interfered with their right-of-way. But the farmers were willing to stand up for their beliefs, even if it meant war!

MILITARY GHOSTS ON THE CARSON—Ft. Churchill, Nevada, stood as the guardian of the wilderness in pioneer days. Now it has crumbled into disrepair, but the memories of its greatness still linger in the dusky buildings and disintegrating walls.

A NEW MYSTERY ON THE DONNER TRAIL—What strange prehistoric creatures built the mound-like nests on Utah's bleak Mud Desert?

TOP MAN OF THE WILD BUNCH—Butch Cassidy was one of the West's most famous outlaws. The leader of the "Wild Bunch," he was no killer—until that last showdown in South America.

CHUCKHOLE CHUCKLES—History has its humorous moments—especially when recorded in the old-time daily newspapers and journals of the old West. Here's something that will touch your heart with laughter.

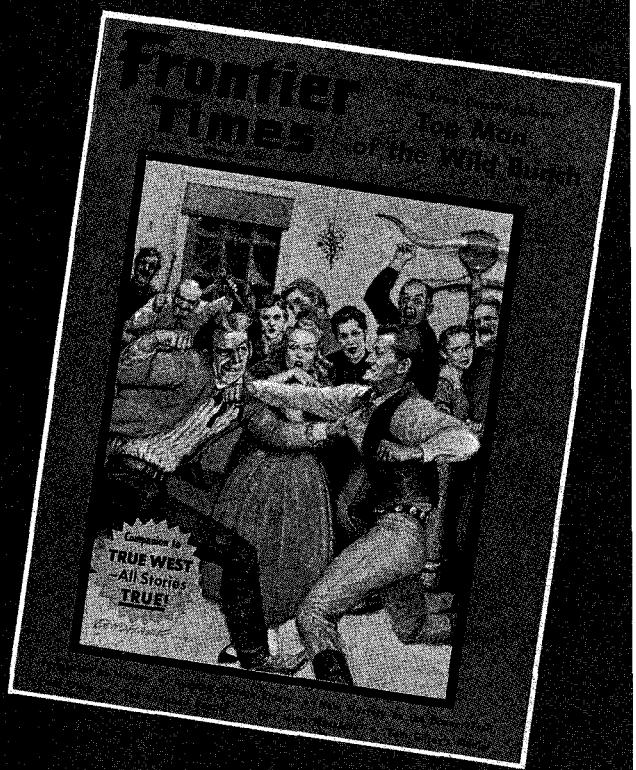
LONG JACK—Life was sawdust and root-hog, whiskey and hard work in Nevada's goldrush days.

THE VANISHED PEOPLE—Years before the arrival of the white man in Arizona, New Mexico, and southwestern Colorado, a thriving culture—that of the Hohokam Indians—existed. What happened to these people is one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of the West.

THE FORT MIMS MASSACRE—The settlers and soldiers at Ft. Mims, Alabama, had no idea death would be the dessert for their noon meal that day in 1813.

TOM GILROY'S FIDDLER—Night before a cattle drive—big party in the offing. A party means dancin'—but how can you dance without a fiddler to saw out a tune?

ALSO, NUGGETS including AMERICA'S GREATEST TREASURE TROVE, by Tom Bailey, THE MISSING CHRISTMAS MAIL, SALTY TALK, and a whole passel of rare old West photos and illustrations!




WE'VE been hearing the above statement from reade more and more lately. By golly, if Frontier Tim IS better than True West, all I've got to say is "W didn't GO to do it!"

Both magazines are edited by the same team—com from the same file. As we explained in the beginnin it's like a row of canned peas without labels. You lab half one brand and half another, for some good reaso and you'll have people all over the country saying o brand is better than the other!

In this particular case, we had to put the label "Fro tier Times" on some issues of True West SO WE COUL STAY ON THE NEWSSTANDS LONGER, for that is o life's blood and makes the difference of squeezin through or hitting the skids like so many other mag zines during these extremely difficult days of publishin

Now you be the judge. Take this issue of TRUE WEST, re every article—then compare it with this issue of FRONTI TIMES. Sure, there may be some difference—but there is no mo difference than there is in one issue of TRUE WEST over anoth

So folks, BELIEVE ME, if you are not reading Fronti Times, you are, in effect, missing four issues of True We a year!

**FRONTIER TIMES, Box 5008-TW, Austin 31, Texas**

I am enclosing ☐ $1 for 4 issues; ☐ $2 for 8 issues; ☐ $3 for 12 issues (check one) of FRONTIER TIMES.

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The accompanying pictures graphically show how and why the great herds that once rambled across the western prairies became virtually extinct in a few years. To our knowledge, these are the first photographs ever taken of a

# Buffalo

Above, George Robertson, photographer of the buffalo hunt, who was brought to Texas by W. J. Oliphant. Below, Meat for Dinner! Left to right: Douglas the dog, Emil Oberwetter, and John Logan. Notice the rifle.

**Editor's Note: The substance of this article appeared in *Holland's Magazine* in October, 1927. Dr. Webb has revised it slightly for TRUE WEST. It is fortunate that he got the story when he did for by 1930 the only two men who knew of the buffalo hunt were dead.**

ABOUT 1926, the photographic plates of a buffalo hunt were uncovered in Austin, Texas. This hunt was made in the Texas Panhandle in 1874 at the time that the great bison slaughter was getting under way. It is indeed remarkable that such pictures were ever made, that a photographer should have gone into the field and made a photographic record of such a hunt. These photographs are believed to be the first made in the field.

It was in 1878 that L. A. Huffman went to Montana with his cameras. In the early eighties the naturalist, W. T. Hornaday, awoke to the fact that the buffalo had been practically exterminated. He led an expedition in search of the pitiful remnant of the northern herd, managing to procure a few specimens for scientific purposes. However, this was not a hunt—it was a funeral, the last sad rite performed over a dying species by a man whose wrath and sympathy had been stirred by the tragedy of indiscriminate slaughter. But the accompanying photographs preserve a cross section—small though it be—of the slaughter itself. They are therefore of extraordinary value and should be kept as a record.

If it is remarkable that these photographs were made, it is equally so that they have been lost to the public so completely, especially in the light of the revived interest in all that pertains to the West. These photographs—or most of them—were brought to light by Miss Mabel Brooks of the Texas State Library in Austin. Miss Brooks came upon some old plates while searching for pictures of early Austin in the home of Mr. Max Wolff. The plates were carried to a photographer. When developed they were found to be Texas frontier scenes. That they were made on a buffalo hunt was evident, but nothing was known as to when they were made or where. The square mahogany box in which the glass plates were preserved furnished a clue.



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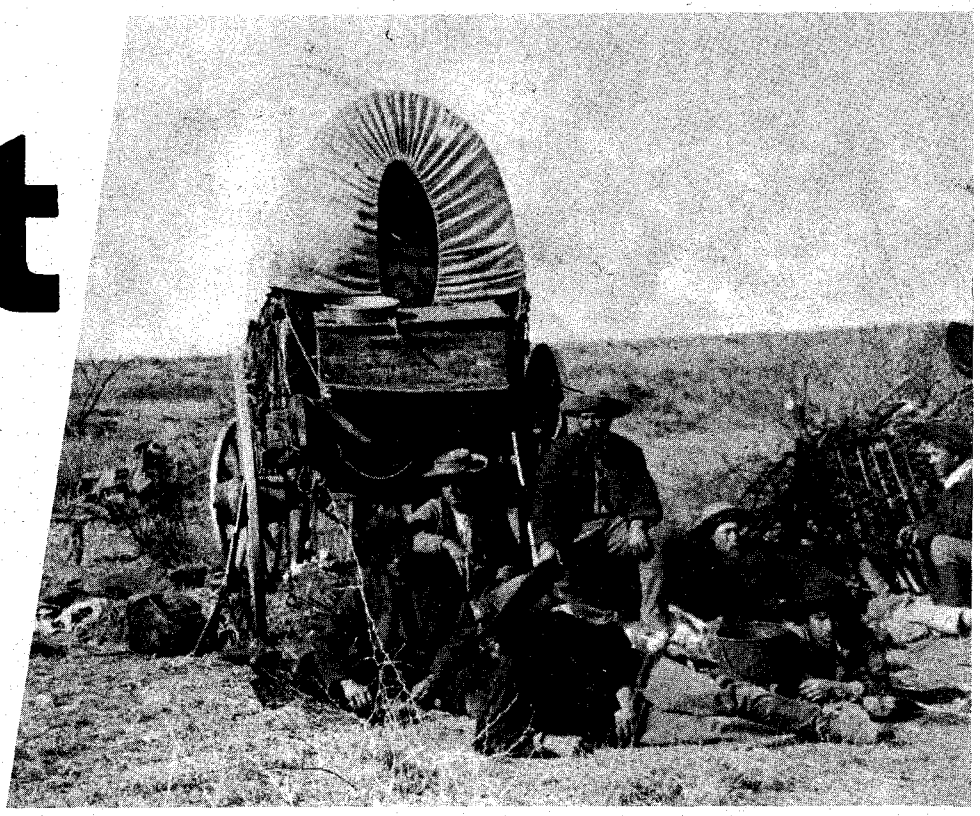
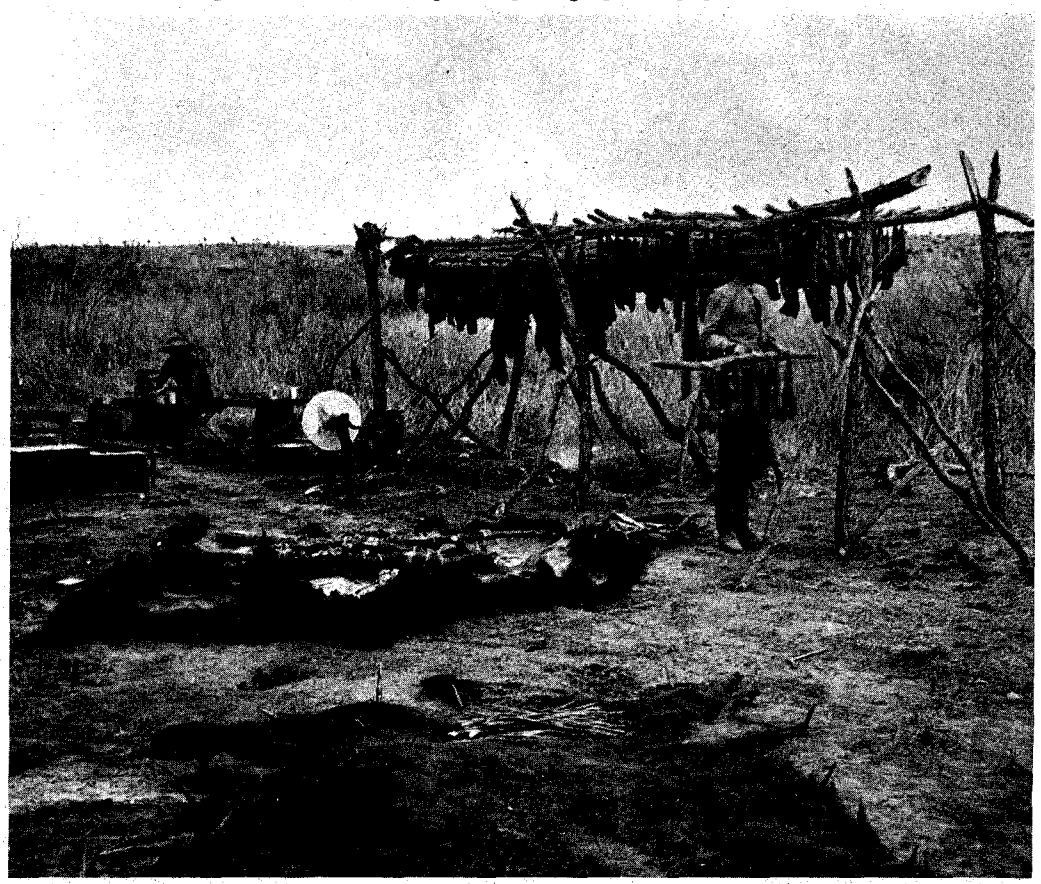
By DR. WALTER PRESCOTT WEBB

Photos Courtesy the Author

# Hunt



Above, a prairie camp. Below, scaffolds for drying the buffalo meat. Notice the grindstone, water keg, and photographic equipment at left.



It bore the name of W. J. Oliphant, Photographer. Mr. Oliphant, who was living in Austin at the time, was able to recall some of the incidents connected with the buffalo hunt and to give other clues. At this stage Miss Brooks turned the investigation over to me, and I set out to locate, if possible, a survivor of the unrecorded expedition. It turned out that three men in Austin knew something about the buffalo expedition, but none of them went on it. All those who did go were dead save one, E. R. Oberwetter, of Houston, Texas, the youngest member of the party. And he died in less than a year from the date of my interview with him in 1926. Thus it would seem that these old plates which had been forgotten for fifty years were not uncovered too soon. The following account is based upon the details furnished by W. J. Oliphant, of Austin, and E. R. Oberwetter, of Houston. I am obligated to Miss Mabel Brooks for information about the photos and to Mr. Max Wolff for permission to use the old plates.

IN 1874 Texas was in a pioneer condition. The eastern part of the state had been settled, but the settlements stopped at the edge of the plains, and west of the hundredth meridian there was nothing in the way of civilization. A string of United States forts extended from the Red River on the north to the Rio Grande on the south, separating the Indian country from the white settlements. These forts were garrisoned by small squads of soldiers. Few people dared go beyond the line of these forts, and many who did go never returned. The West was the land of danger, of adventure, and of remote opportunity. All sorts of stories floated about the settlements as to what lay out in the Plains. One story, which gained credence, was to the effect that in what is now Archer County there were rich deposits of copper. The copper cropped out on the surface, they said, and could be found in chunks as big as a wagon bed.

Capital and adventure have ever been partners in man's conquest of the world. A group of men organized a copper stock company in Austin, and sent out an ox-drawn wagon train to pick up the copper in the Plains country. There were six wagons, each wagon drawn by six



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Above, the photograph gallery on Pecan Street in Austin, Texas, where the photographs were finished. Pecan Street is now Sixth Street. The Oliphant Gallery was located where the Driskill Hotel now stands. Below, a buffalo hunters' camp. Notice the photo equipment on the left.

oxen. The state recognized and aided the undertaking by enlisting all the men, stockholders and adventurers, as frontier soldiers. A Theodore Tuschinski was made captain, just why no one ever knew. The real leader, wagon boss, and chief bull-whacker was Newton Mayfield.

Mr. Oberwetter's account of the experience of this party is interesting enough, but has no place here. The expedition went as far north and west as Wichita Falls, Texas, ran out of food, lost most of the oxen in a stampeding buffalo herd, and found no copper. The party returned to Austin in the last days of 1873, destitute.

But the young Texans had been impressed with the immense herds of buffalo they had seen on the Western plains. People had learned that buffalo meat had a market value, and that hides were in great demand. Newton Mayfield made an agreement with the stockholders that he would return to the Plains and recoup the losses by killing buffalo and marketing the meat and hides. The stockholders furnished the wagons and teams, and it was agreed that the hunters should recover, if possible, the oxen left on the plains in the previous expedition, and in this they had some success.

In this manner the buffalo hunt was launched. There was not a man in the crowd who was experienced in buffalo hunting, but the party took all the equipment needed, such as Sharps rifles and a few "Big Fifties" that were coming into use; axes, picks, shovels for digging pits, knives for skinning the buffalo and cutting the meat, a grindstone for sharpening the knives and tools, a

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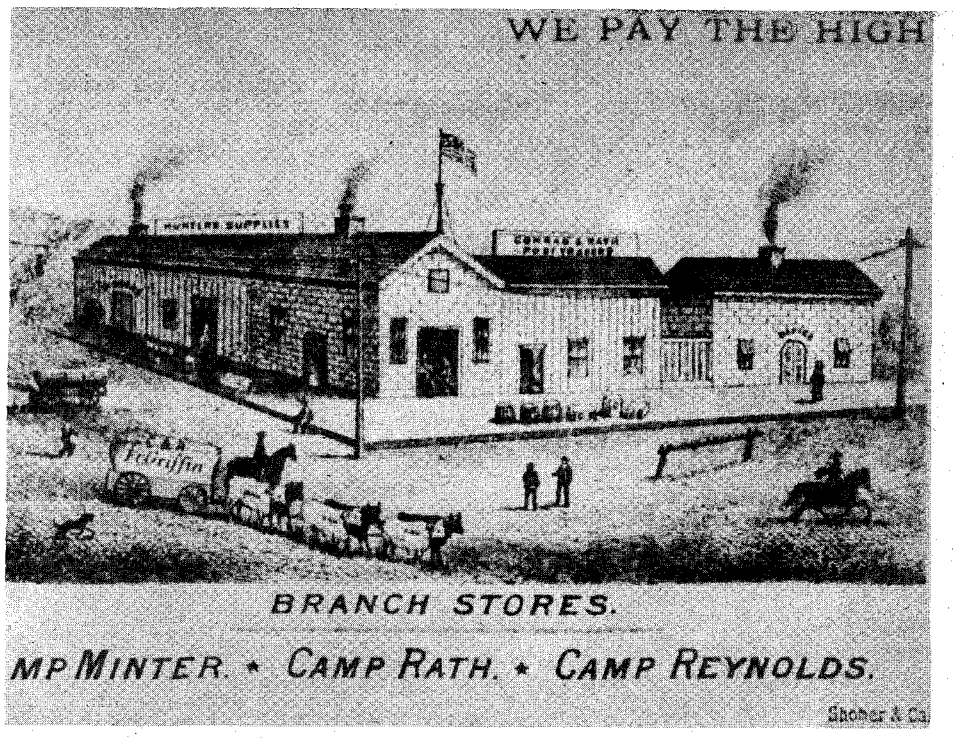
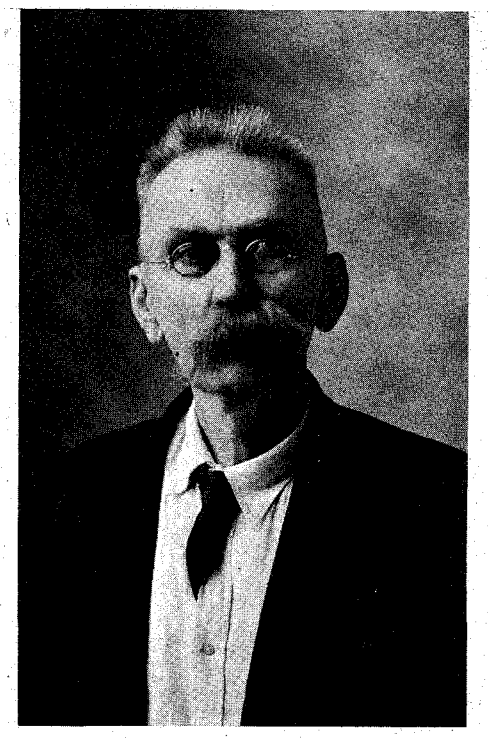


Above left, Conrad and Rath, post traders, Fort Griffin (Shackleford County), Texas. This likeness was reproduced from a letterhead found in the Texas Adjutant General's office in Austin. Fort Griffin was headquarters for the buffalo hunters in West Texas. Above right, Emil Oberwetter, of Houston, Texas, the last survivor of the buffalo hunt. With his death on June 4, 1926, the last source for obtaining further authentic information about the hunt passed out of grasp. Below, a group of buffalo hunters pause beside their wagons to be photographed.

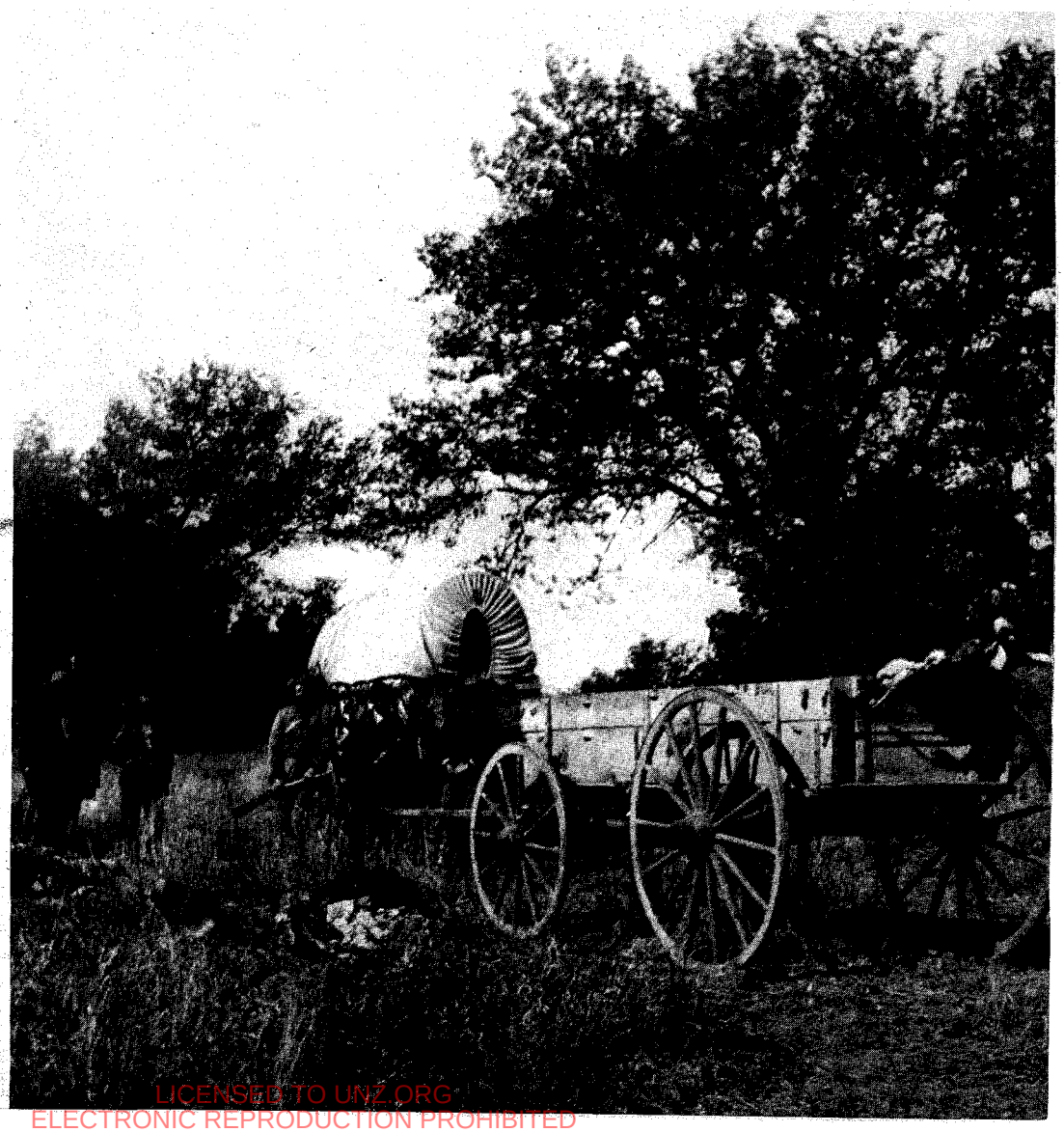
supply of foodstuffs, strychnine for poisoning varmints, and a thousand pounds of salt to use in curing the meat.

NO ONE made more careful preparation for this trip than the photographer. George Robertson was in the employ of W. J. Oliphant.

"When at the age of nineteen I returned from the Civil War," said Mr. Oliphant, "I took up a study of photography in an art studio opened by two northern men in Austin, Texas. At this time tintypes were giving way to the regular photographs, and in 1868 I went to Washington to study photography in Alexander Gardner's studio on Seventh Street, not far from where the Post Office Department was situated at that time. In Washington I met George Robertson, who was also with Gardner. He became interested in Texas and talked much about life there. After returning to Austin I opened a studio on Pecan Street, now Sixth Street, over my father's jewelry store. I corresponded with Robertson, and arranged to have him come to Texas, which he did about 1872. At that time the stereoscope was much in vogue, and a new thing. I bought a stereoscopic camera and started building up different series of views. The most popular series was one entitled 'Life on the Frontier.' While Robertson was with me, he made two trips, one with the buffalo hunting expedition, and the other with a geological survey of Texas. All his views were put into the 'Life on the Frontier' series.

"The preparation for these field excursions had to be made with greatest care. Photography was in its infancy then and the making of outdoor pictures was at best a laborious process, requiring much patience. Robertson was just the man for the job, mechanical, something of a tinkerer by disposition. He worked hard and carefully to manufacture the equipment that he had to have. He made a darkroom out of an old trunk, with a screen window of yellow glass in the top. He made openings in the trunk, one for each arm, and fitted over these holes sleeves of dark cloth through which he could put his hands in order to manipulate the plates and chemicals inside

*(Continued on page 36)*





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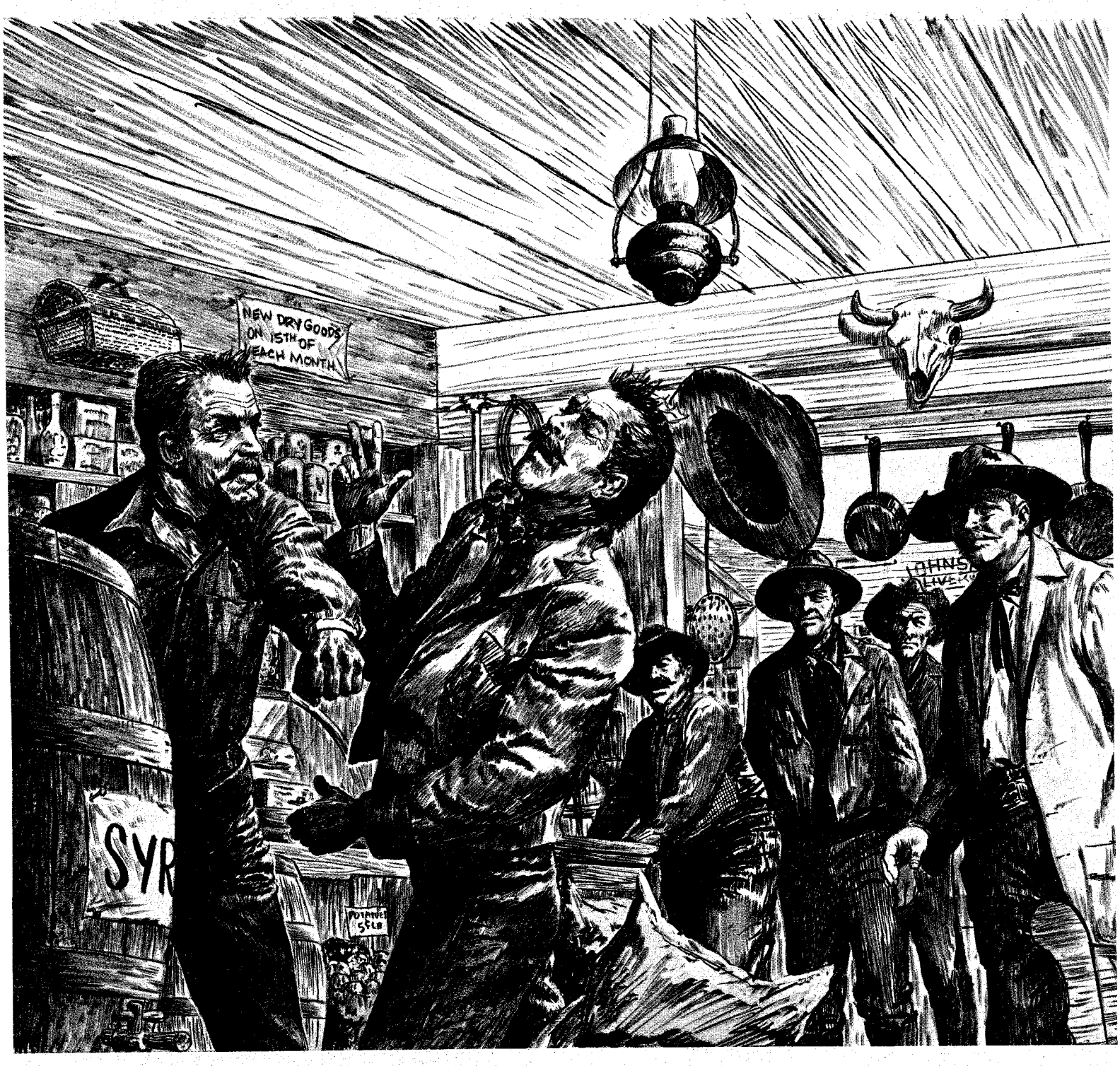
# Lady Luck and the Life of Pete

By JOHN L. SINCLAIR

Illustrated by Dave Kinney



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## Pine Log didn't become capital of the State of California—

## but the efforts of its citizens to gain that honor saved a man's life!

IN THE little mining town of Columbia, California, the Sabbath was the dreariest of the week's seven days, but on Sunday, November 13, 1853, the miners were shaken out of their doldrums by the most cheerful piece of news they had received in several weeks—a man had been murdered! The happiest truth of all was that the murderer was in custody awaiting the usual treatment—vengeance by the mob. Nothing ever provided as much excitement as a lynching, especially on the Day of Rest.

On Sundays, the miners, for want of anything better to do, flocked in from the less exciting towns of Sonora, Pine Log and other spots. On this day Columbia was jam-packed.

The killing had occurred in C. H. Alverding's store at the corner of Main and Jackson Streets. The man in custody was a drunken sot known as Peter Nicholas, an Austrian—bull-headed, bellicose and spoiling for a fight.

Just prior to Nicholas' arrival in town from nearby Pine Log, a matter of considerable importance had been discussed. Columbia wanted to become the state capital but knew it hadn't a ghost of a chance to succeed over Sacramento and some of the other towns in the race. As a joke, someone proposed that the town of Pine Log be nominated.

Amid a burst of guffawing, the storekeeper produced several sheets of legal-sized ruled paper and tossed them on the counter. With a quill pen he wrote:

". . . we nominate the fair town of Pine Log to become the capital of the beautiful State of California, a domicile of men of the utmost nobility."

Just then a well-known and well-liked miner, John Parote, sober for the moment, walked in. Parote was from Pine Log.

"You've arrived just in time to be the first signer to this petition," Alverding said. "That's quite an honor."

Parote laughed as heartily as the rest when the storekeeper explained the great farce that was being promulgated upon the town of Pine Log. But before he could sign the petition, Peter Nicholas, holding onto one barrel, then the next, made his way to the counter. He proceeded to curse Parote.

The two got into a scuffle and fell to the floor.

"Help me!" Parote shouted. "He's got a knife!"

The storekeeper leaped over the counter to go to Parote's rescue. Others ran up and dragged Nicholas off Parote. The latter had been stabbed several times and was dying.

The knife was wrenched from Pete's bloody hand. Two miners dragged him to a chair and lashed his legs to it. They also secured his hands.

At last the monotony of the dull afternoon was broken. Some real entertainment would follow, for pantomine under the town's one cottonwood tree was Columbia's own claim to theatrical talent. It was more exhilarating than the belly-wiggling and leg-hoisting of the girls at the Melodeon.

Grapevine sped the word up the gulch—from shack to shack, from mouth to mouth. It wasn't long until there was a howling mob in front of Alverding's store.

Pete was taken out and frog-hopped up to the residence of Justice Cardey—to the very temple of right and fidelity. Cardey quickly committed Pete for trial, and the mob was willing to be patient—until he sobered up. A man had to be sober to realize why a rope was put around his neck.

Columbia had no jail, so Pete was placed in a room next to Justice Cardey's office, securely shackled to the floor. A two-man guard kept him company.

When the prisoner eventually stirred in his chair and asked, "Where am I?" the word went out that he was sober. In less time than it takes to saddle a gentle nag, he was dragged to the hanging tree. It grew in the gulch just south of the Broadway Hotel. Here John Parote's murder would be avenged by a crowd as hard as the metal it mined. Nothing under the night sky could frustrate this operation. Nothing short of an act of God.

But the boys didn't reckon with the timely arrival of a budding lawyer named James W. Coffroth, who hailed from Sacramento.

THIS COFFROTH, who was in town on business, was a man of cunning, a walking dictionary of legal terms, with legs made to strut the courtroom—his larynx tuned to be heard. His purpose was to defend iniquitous men, to befriend the blighted. And if ever the iniquitous, hopelessly-blighted Pete Nicholas needed a friend, it was then—under the cottonwood tree, while the hangrope tickled his neck.

Now Pete Nicholas followed the mining man's profession, and his goddess was Lady Luck. She had succoured him in the gulch, helped him fill the pokes; she favored him at the faro tables. Now on the brink of eternity she was with Pete again, for Coffroth was determined to fight for the doomed man's life. And, quite naturally, for the gold Pete possessed.

Miners such as Pete were born to benefit lawyers like Coffroth. The amount of Pete's fortune was not generally known. A European, he was therefore trained to European thrift. True, he spent much at the fleshpots. But he saved his



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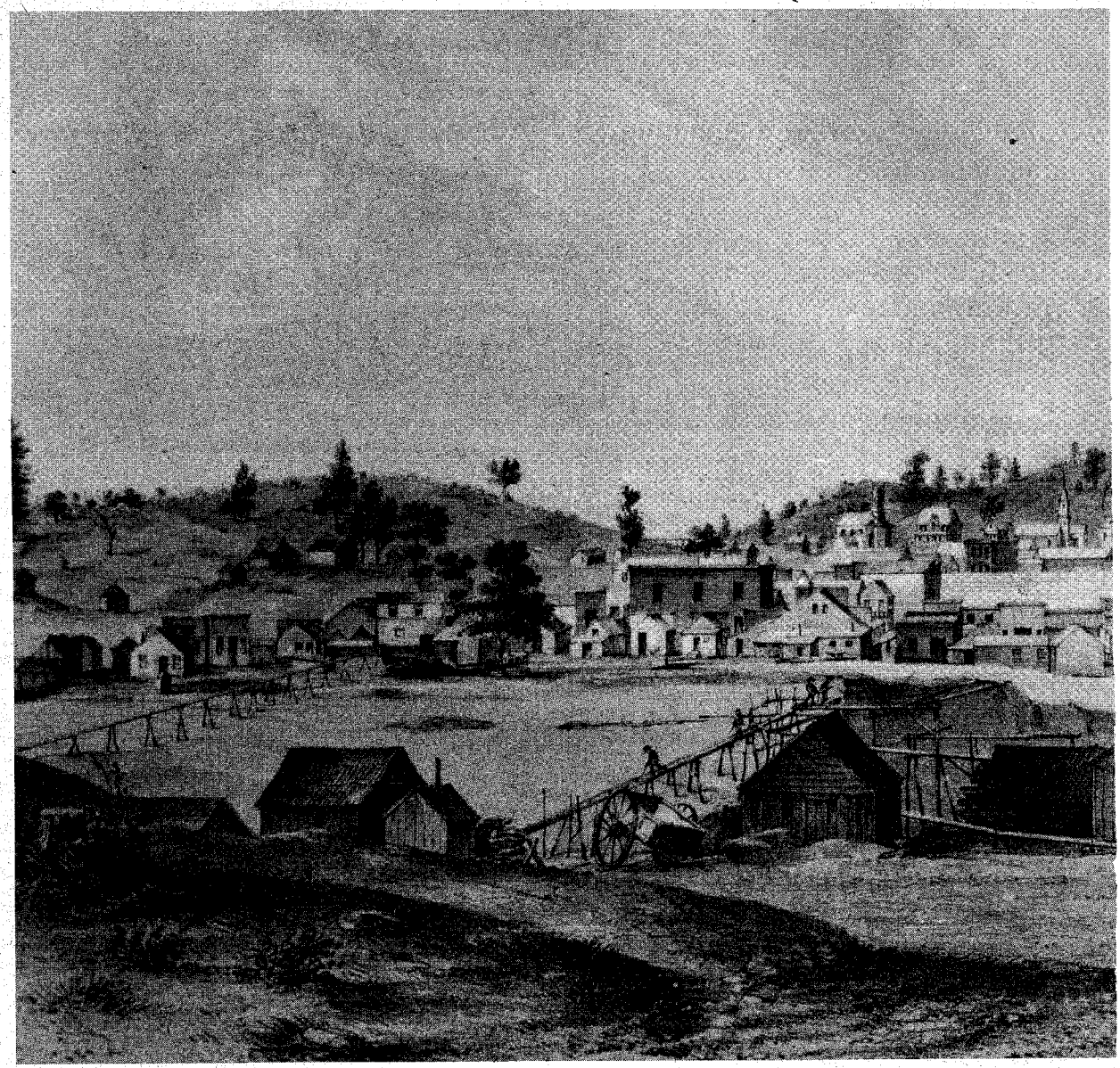

**Above, Columbia, California, during the gold rush days. Below, Sonora, California, in 1853, viewed from the north.**

California State Library Collection

dust, too. It was well known that he had pounds of it secretly cached in various places. Two pounds here, five pounds there, and ten yonder—at a time when gold was worth about twenty dollars an ounce.

It is ethical, and usual, for a lawyer to confer with a client before taking the case. But not so Coffroth on behalf of Nicholas. Here was a time problem, preliminaries forbidden. Here the code was a little off the ethical, but Coffroth was not the absolute ethical man. He was versed in two laws—the statute and the unwritten. And he was confident that a man will pay out his wealth to the last copper for the sake of saving his life.

Coffroth took the stand, without as much as a glance at Pete. He raised his arms high, begged the attention of the uncouth assembly. Had he been garbed in a toga, rather than in the tailored exquisiteness of 1853, he could have been not Coffroth addressing mob ignorance, but Marcus Antonius before the citizenry of Rome.

"Sons of the Mother Lode!" he began, holding his walking cane aloft.

Now a hush fell over the mob. Every eye was focused, each ear was cocked. Here, they thought, was the overture before the show.



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From Kuchel and Dresel's CALIFORNIA VIEWS
Courtesy California State Library

"Men of Columbia, that paradise of the Sierra slope—that uncut diamond—"

Through the use of Coffrothisms it was made plain that Pete had committed murder, that he was a worthless rogue, dangerous to have about town. And, by all rights, he should be hanged. No man on earth deserved death more than Pete Nicholas.

"But," the lawyer ranted, "let us consider this most prudent——"

Coffroth reminded the mob that it was comprised of highly intelligent men—solid men, good men, and not to forget that it is the unbounded duty of a good man to lynch a bad man.

"But, gentlemen, please———".

He urged them to consider this ticklish situation, to *think* before pulling on the rope. . . . Think! If Pete were hanged within the limits of Columbia, wouldn't Columbia hang herself with adverse criticism from out of the alien world?

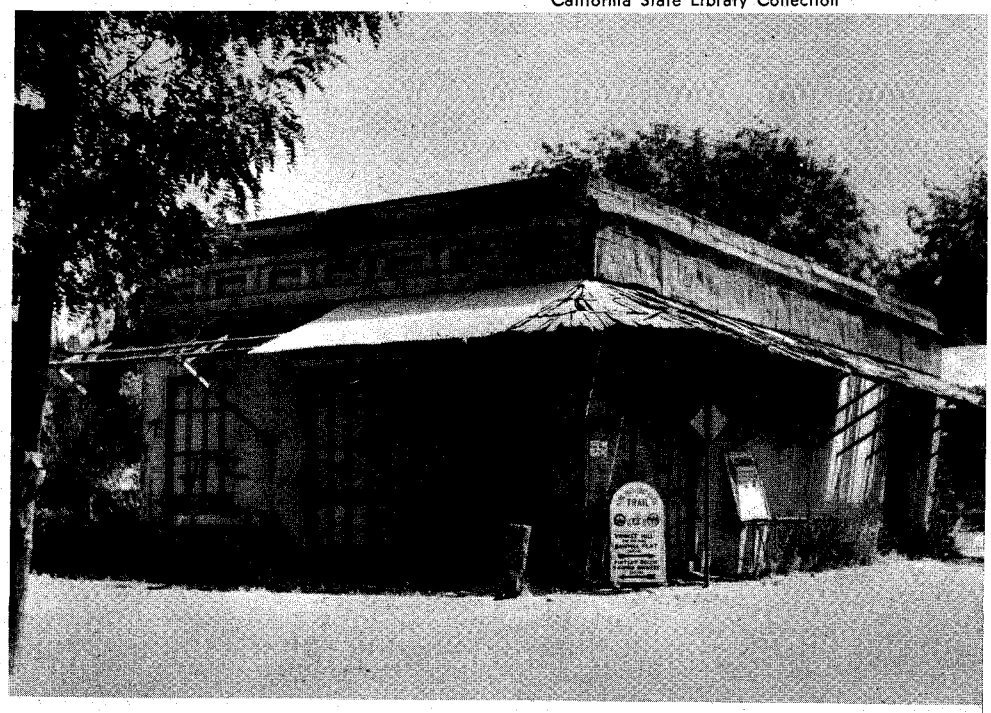
"Alas, Pete is an Austrian, not a citizen of the United States. . . . How would Vienna react toward Columbia? . . . Why incite the wrath of Franz Jozef, one of the most powerful monarchs of the globe? Why cause unheaval in the Schoenbrunn? Why incite such a catastrophe?"

Coffroth's oratory was spiced for a

*(Continued on page 48)*

**The Pioneer Saloon in Columbia.**

California State Library Collection





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# THREE ROCKS TWO GRAVES — AND A FORTUNE IN

By TOM BAILEY

A MODEST fortune in U.S. gold coins minted in the early 1830's (worth at the time $150,000 but of a greater value now) was buried some forty miles east of Taos, New Mexico, in the year 1839. If recovered, the gold pieces would bring from $400,000 to $500,000, according to specie dealers.

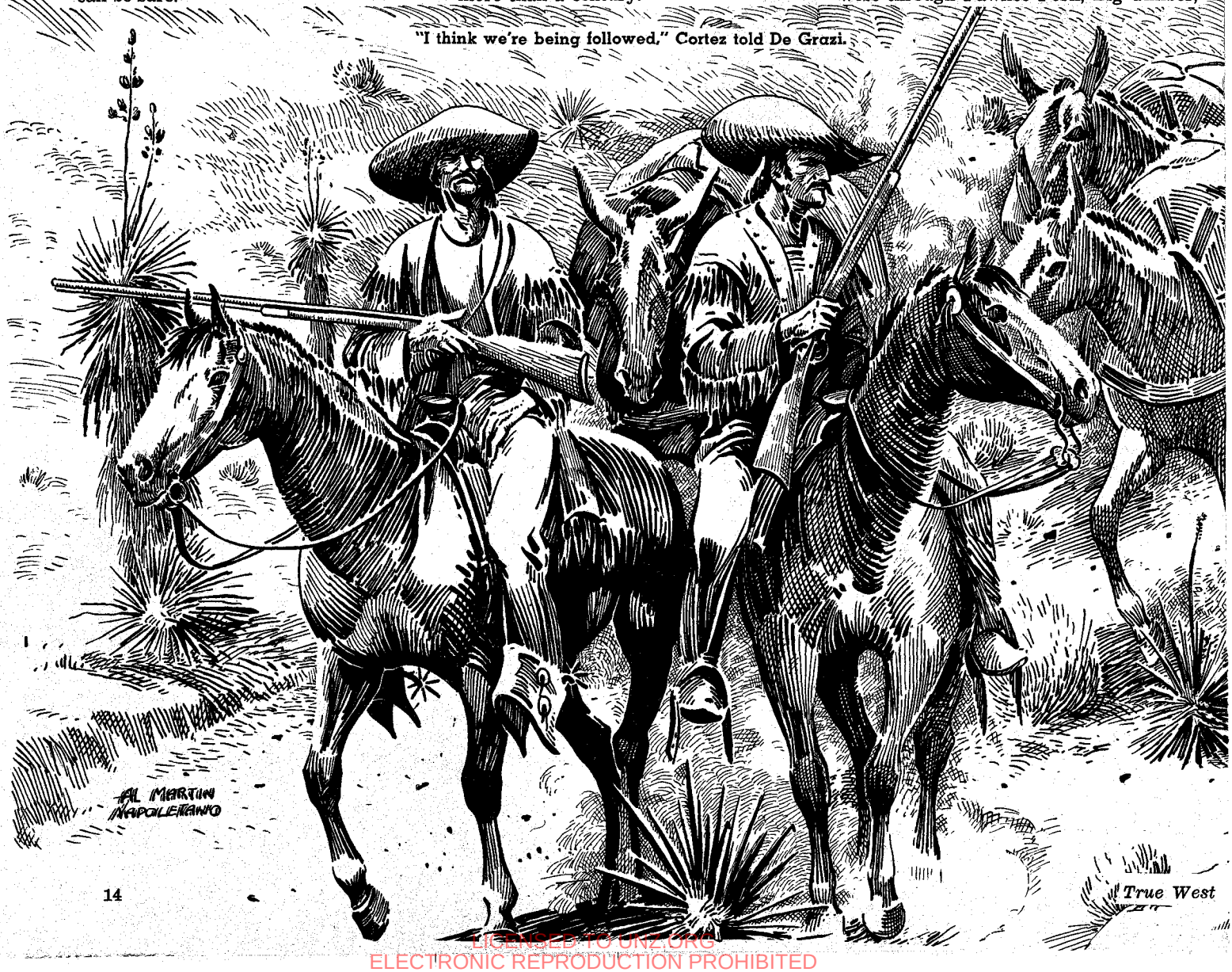
As in most cases of buried treasure, a mystery surrounds this one. Proof that the gold was buried is ample, but is it still there? Certain known facts suggest that it is and there is no proof that it was ever dug up, yet the massacre of half-a-dozen men who were searching for it is the hub around which the mystery revolves. Was the money recovered by the slayers of these men? No one can be sure.

It is one of the least publicized lost treasures in this country and has been hunted by comparatively few men over the years. There are any number of places east of Taos which fit the description of the burial place—a rock described as "half as big as a house." There are many rocks in the region that are half as big as a house, and "forty miles east of Taos" covers a vast territory.

In early December of 1839 Raul Cortez and Mañuel DeGrazi, with three Mexican packers whose names are unknown, camped overnight after traveling east a day and a half out of Taos. There occurred the events which are described herein, and which have puzzled men for more than a century.

YEARS BEFORE the war with Mexico brought Santa Fe into the United States, overland travelers from Missouri had developed a lively commerce with that outpost of civilization. In 1838, Cortez and De Grazi traveled from Santa Fe to Independence, Missouri, establishing a route they were to follow east and also one they were to follow west with wagons and heavily-packed mules. The two routes differed only at the western terminus and no one except Cortez, De Grazi and their hired packers knew the trails they followed on their journey eastward. The main route as described in the journals of the time ran from Independence to Council Grove, crossing half-a-dozen streams. It then went on west through Pawnee Fork, Big Timber,

"I think we're being followed," Cortez told De Grazi.



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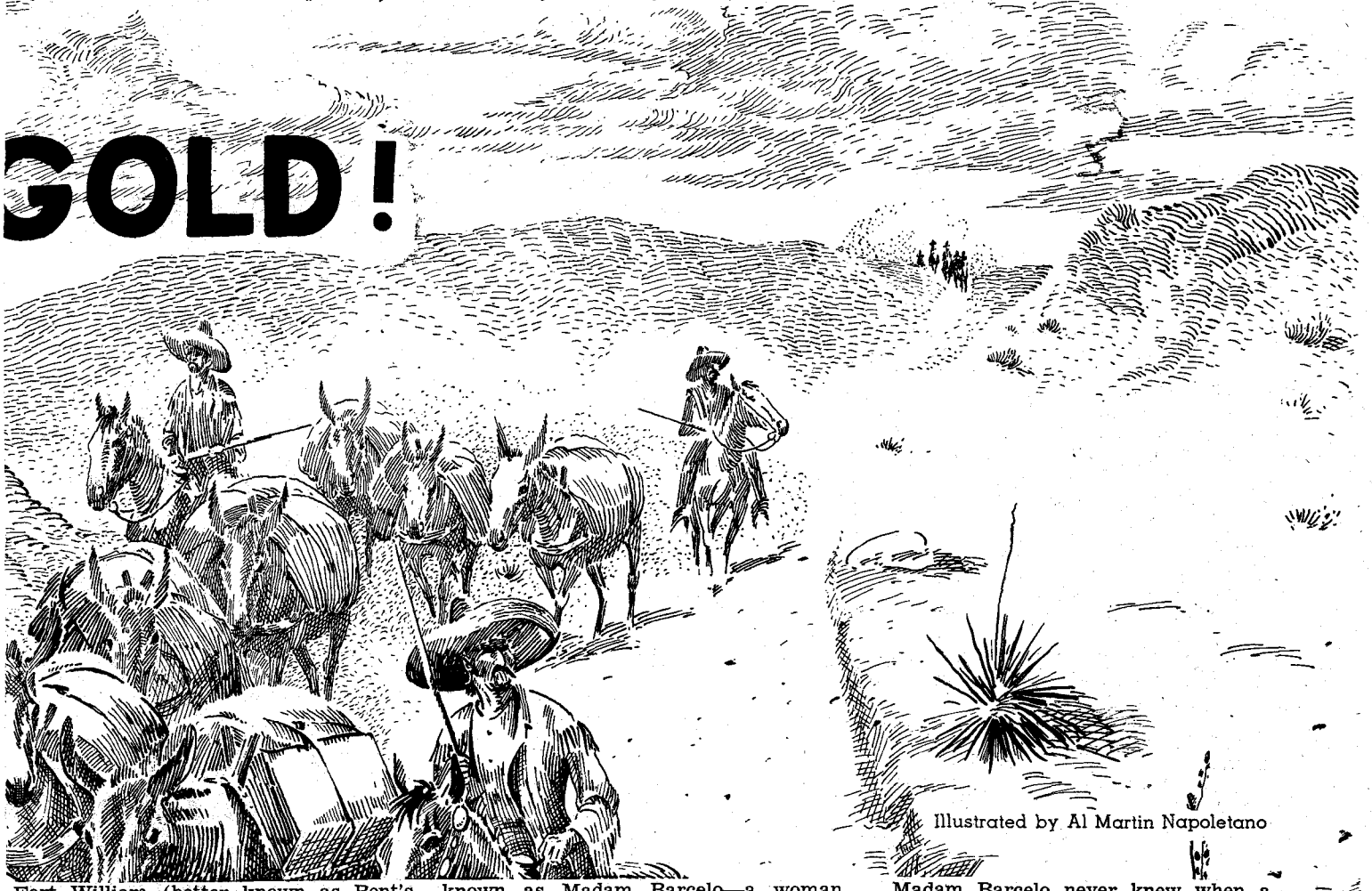
*"Thar's still gold in them thar New Mexico hills!" Somewhere east of Taos it lies hidden—$500,000 worth, already minted! Will anyone ever find it?*

# GOLD!



Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano

Fort William (better known as Bent's Fort) and southwest into the mountains that circled Taos. One of the several camping spots at the western end was a lake (since identified as Deer Lake) where a three-day rest was usually taken. The return trip was made at a faster pace, through uncharted mountain passes where elevations frequently rose to 8,000 feet and better. It was on this stretch of the trail that the gold was buried. It is unlikely that Cortez and De Grazi would have taken this route in early December; however, no one can be sure.

There were about 5,000 residents in Santa Fe and almost as many in Taos in that year of 1839. Cortez and De Grazi catered especially to the wealthy, who were willing to pay top prices for the things they wanted from the east. Goods were shipped by boat up the Mississippi from New Orleans, then up the Missouri to Independence. There they were packed up and freighted west, part of the way by wagon and the remaining distance on mule-back. Wagons were used until the high mountains were reached; they were left there in charge of Mexican guards until the mules returned from Santa Fe.

Cortez was a personal friend of Louis Robidoux, Mayor of Santa Fe and a prosperous and influential businessman. Through him contacts were made with the wealthy who depended upon the freighters for the supplies that were not available in Taos or Santa Fe.

Others who were friends of the traders were the Governor of the territory, Mañuel Armijo, and Señora Toulos, also known as Madam Barcelo—a woman gambler who was amassing a fortune dealing monte in her prosperous saloon and dancehall.

Banking facilities were unavailable in Santa Fe and Taos. The so-called banks that did exist were unsound and run by men of questionable repute. Anxious to transfer some of her mounting wealth to a bank in New York where she had an account, Madam Barcelo approached Cortez about hauling her gold across country to Independence. From there she could have it shipped to New Orleans and then to New York.

Cortez and De Grazi, who had built up a splendid reputation for honesty, agreed to take the gold to Independence for shipment but they would not guarantee safe delivery in the event of attack by Indians or Mexican bandits. On this the shipper would have to take her own chances.

"Hire many guards," Madam Barcelo said.

"If we hired many guards that would only advertise the fact we have riches aboard our mules," Cortez said. "The fewer preparations we make and the fewer precautions we take the better."

On their trips west with expensive goods, Cortez and De Grazi never worried about being robbed. Robbers would have had little chance of getting the loot to a safe place, due to its bulk. Bandits struck only when there was gold or silver aboard a shipment, and since Cortez and De Grazi had never carried gold or silver before, they had never had to contend with this problem.

Madam Barcelo never knew when a gang of Mexican bandits might move in and clean her place out, so she was anxious to get her gold to New York at any cost and was willing to take chances.

The gold in Madam Barcelo's possession was in both Mexican and American coins, but she was sending only the American currency to New York. The rest eventually would be sent to a bank in Mexico City.

The gold coins had been accumulating over many months of prosperous gambling, dropped by traders, trappers, freighters and American travelers to the West. The gold was packed in twenty-five buckskin pouches. During the night before the departure they were placed in packs on ten of the mules.

There was a wagon pass in the mountains used by some freighters, but due to the rough terrain the wagons were slow and sometimes broke down. For this part of the journey west, Cortez and De Grazi used mules that brought the freight through much faster and won for them the undying gratitude of those who were always in a hurry for something. The wagons were invariably days, even weeks, late in arriving.

ON THIS trip east, Cortez and De Grazi took no extra helpers, employing only three Mexican packers. Every precaution was taken to keep the gold shipment secret. Not even the close associates of Madam Barcelo knew about it. The only one necessary to tell was

*(Continued on page 41)*



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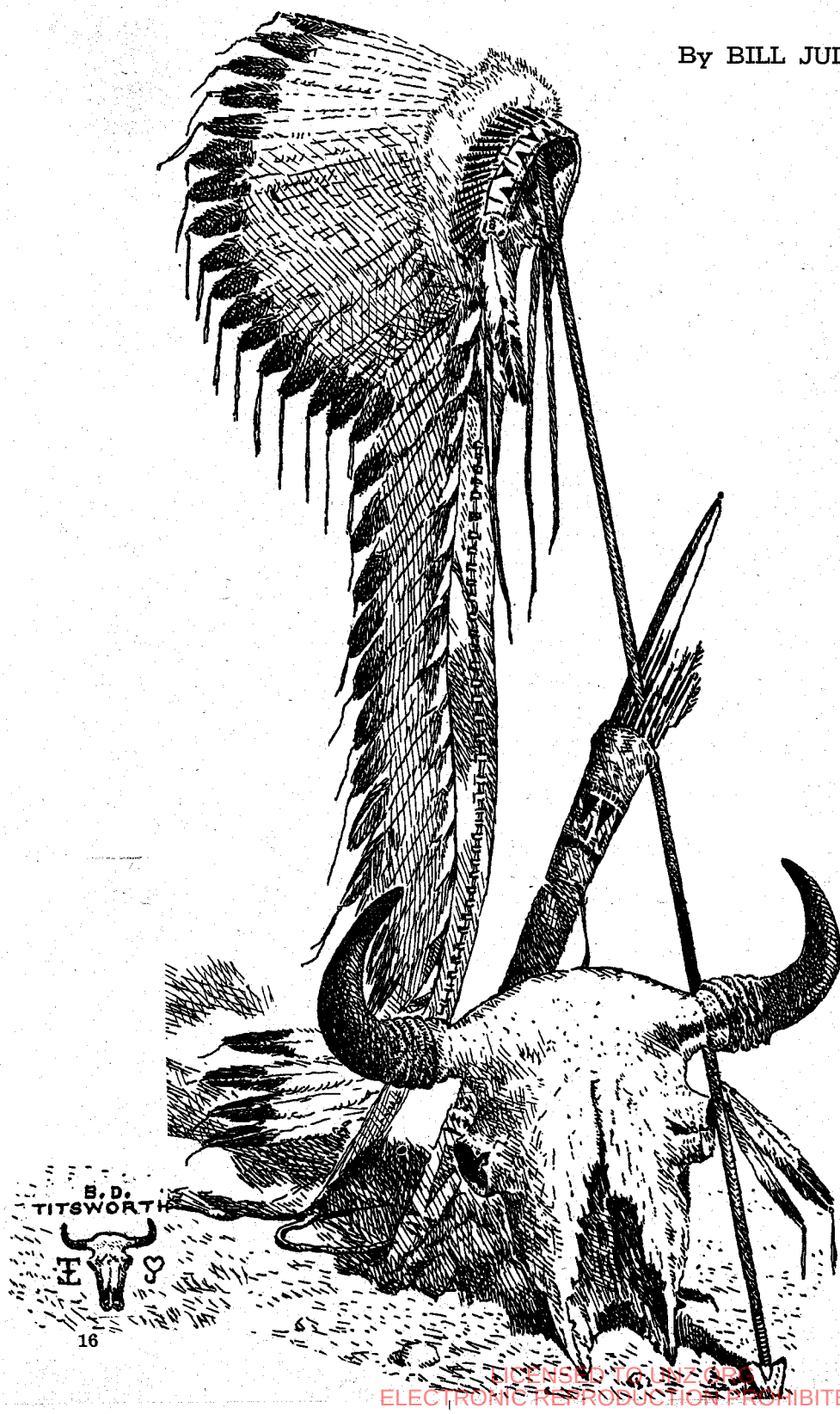
# Battle on Bear River

***The Civil War in the East necessitated the recall of Union troops protecting the Overland trail from the fierce Bannock Indians until Colonel Conner and his California Volunteers stormed the Indians' barricades and opened the trail to travelers again.***

By BILL JUDGE




**TO THE PUBLIC: From information received at this department, deemed sufficiently reliable to warrant me in so doing, I consider it my duty to warn all persons contemplating the crossing of the plains this fall, to Utah or the Pacific Coast, that there is good reason to apprehend hostilities on the part of the Bannock and Shoshone or Snake Indians, as well as the Indians upon the plains and along the Platte River.**

**The Indians referred to have, during the past summer, committed several robberies and murders; they are numerous, powerful and warlike, and should they generally assume a hostile attitude are capable of rendering the emigrant routes across the plains extremely perilous; hence this warning.**

THE SITUATION along the Overland trail had become so serious by the fall of 1862 that the Indian Commissioner had the above notice posted in all public places, especially in and around Ft. Hall where the trail branched southward to California, westward to Oregon and Utah and northward to the Montana gold mines. The Bannock Indians, a small but ferocious tribe occupying the southeastern part of what is now Idaho, were making savage raids on the Overland's travelers with unremitting frequency. They had enlisted the aid of neighboring tribes in trying to make the life of the white man in their region extremely perilous.

The Bannocks held their territory both by diplomatic maneuvering and an aggressive attitude toward their more numerous enemies. Never numbering more than 2,000, they manipulated the balance of power by getting help from the Shoshones or Utes whenever danger threatened them or their territory.

When persuasion failed to enlist the necessary aid, they were not averse to threatening war to secure the desired help. War with the Bannocks was like trying to ward off a swarm of gadflies. It was never an out and out fight to the death between large numbers of combatants, but rather a series of persistent, stinging nuisance raids that never ceased nor permitted rest until peace was made. There comes a time in tribal warfare when any fighting nation, which most of the Plains Indians were, prefers peace and rest. Rather than risk an endless war with the Bannocks, neighboring tribes became their allies.



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The Bannock territory, from the earliest times, had spelled trouble to any white man's expedition, whether its purpose was map making, fur trading or emigration to the West Coast. As they were among the first to offer resistance to the intrusion of the white man, so they were among the last to resign themselves to life on a reservation.

With the outbreak of the Civil War and the abandonment of the frontier by the regular army, the Bannocks increased the tempo of their raids along the Overland trail until it became virtually impossible for any wagontrain, no matter what its size, to pass unharmed through their territory.

One train of 200 wagons and 700 people was continually harassed and under attack from the moment it entered the Bannock territory until it reached the Humboldt River, halfway through Nevada to California.

Such tragic incidents as the following excited demands for retribution and punishment. On September 2, 1859, only twenty-five miles west of Ft. Hall, a small party was attacked and eight people killed. The survivors traveled for three days on foot before being rescued. Investigation by soldiers of the scene of attack revealed that one little girl, only five years of age, had both of her legs cut off at the knees, her ears cut off and her eyes gouged out of their sockets. The little girl had been forced to walk on the stumps of her legs for the entertainment and amusement of her barbaric mutilators.

The "Otter Massacre" followed this. A wagontrain of forty-four members was attacked by Bannocks near Shoshone Falls on the Snake River. Eighteen were killed by the Indians, four children captured and two children lost. Of the forty-four people, only fifteen survived. They lived only by eating the flesh of five people who died of wounds after the battle.

Chief Washakie of the Eastern Shoshones, known to be a peaceful chief and friendly to all whites, found it increasingly difficult to restrain his younger men from the warpath. Many of them had stolen away to join the Northern Utah Shoshones in an alliance with the Bannocks to prey upon the Overland trail.

Washakie made a trip to Bear River in the fall of 1862 to try to persuade his people to return to the paths of peace but was not entirely successful, even with the immediate members of his own tribe.

The situation along the Overland was so difficult that plans to abandon the route were being seriously considered.

TO THE relief of everyone in the territory, in the fall of 1862, Colonel Connor with a regiment of California Volunteer Infantry and one of Cavalry, joined by an equally divided force of Nevada Volunteer Infantry and Cavalry, arrived to clean up the Indian situation.

The rejoicing over their arrival in Utah was of short duration. It became evident that Colonel Connor had two purposes in his mission to the territory. The Federal Government, it appeared, was a little distrustful of what the Mormons might do during the Civil War, and wanted soldiers in the vicinity of Salt Lake City.

Colonel Connor established his men at Camp Douglas on the heights overlooking Mormon headquarters, a scant three miles from the business district of the city.

Chief Washakie (center) and a group of Eastern Shoshones.

The Mormons were equally distrustful of the volunteer soldiers. Many of those in Salt Lake still remembered the massacre of their people by other volunteer troops in their former residences back East.

Salt Lake City was an important division point of the Overland stage lines. As such, it carried a great amount of influence, both with the stage company and those who catered to it.

According to Colonel Connor, the Mormons used their influence with those interests to demand that he divide his forces for escort and guard duty with the coaches and stations along the way.

Whether his accusations were true or not, the stage company was extremely vacillating in the type of protection it demanded of the troops during this period.

Connor also stated that the Mormons were behind the attacks of the Bannocks and Shoshones on the whites along the Overland trail. His charges included the trading by Mormons of powder, lead and other supplies for the spoils taken from the ravaged wagontrains by the Indians.

He further claimed that he could not send any expedition to punish the Indians before they would be warned by the Mormons.

These were serious charges and while they may not have been entirely true, there was some verification of them in the writings by members of the Mormon faith.

In the words of Brigham Young, "It is cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them."

In another instance, when the horses of a wagontrain disappeared near a remote settlement, an offer of reward to a Mormon brought a prompt return of the horses.

Again, on the eve of the big Connor expedition against the Bannocks and Shoshones, true to Connor's prediction, the Indians were warned of the approach of the soldiers to attack them.

On the credit side of the Mormons, let it be emphatically stated that they offered to contract for the protection of the Overland route and that Colonel Connor recommended that their offer be accepted. It must also be said that many Mormons were massacred during this period by the Bannocks, Shoshones and Utes.

AS A STRATEGIST in the understanding of the ways of Indians and in meting out justice, Colonel Connor was far ahead of his time. After the Civil War, when the regular army resumed operations on the frontier, his basic mode of procedure became the guide to success.

Colonel Connor learned by several scouting expeditions that the war-minded hostiles were camped for the winter in the vicinity of Bear River. Knowing that the Indians would be partially immobilized by weather conditions, Colonel Connor decided upon a strong winter campaign against their main encampment.

Believing also that every movement of his was relayed directly to the Indians, he worked out a scheme that would add deception to his plan of attack.

On January 22, 1863, he ordered Captain Hoyt and Company K of the Third California Volunteer Infantry, two howitzers under Lieutenant Honeyman with twelve men of the Second California Volunteer Cavalry, and a train of fifteen wagons carrying supplies sufficient for a twenty-day campaign, to take the offensive towards Bear River. Connor believed that this would be promptly reported to the Indians, but that the size would not be sufficient to cause alarm. True to expectations Bear Hunter, war chief of the hostiles, received word of the expedition. It is reported that he either said that, "Maybe so, all of the soldiers will die," or that "In spite of the cold weather, they will receive a very hot reception."

Connor's purpose was not only to deceive the Mormons and Indians but to permit the infantry to gain considerable time and distance before he set out with his main body of cavalry.

During the night of January 24, under the cover of darkness and two days after the departure of the infantry detail, Colonel Connor set out from Camp Douglas with his main body of 220 men. Marching through the bitter cold and deep snow, the main force covered a distance of sixty-eight miles that night, continued the march the following day

*(Continued on page 64)*



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# I Scooped the Wellington Disaster

*WELLINGTON, WASHINGTON (Special to the TIMES), March 1, 1910 . . . SNOW SLIDE BURIES THREE TRAINS; 118 VICTIMS; ENTIRE AREA MASS OF WRECKAGE AND DEBRIS; UNCANNY, UNREAL, SILENT . . . LIKE A VAST AND MAJESTIC MAUSOLEUM . . .*

By JACK J. UNDERWOOD as told to HOWARD E. JACKSON

Photo by the Author

J. J. Underwood reads the story he wrote about the foreign laborers who robbed victims of the avalanche. The box above his fingers contains a statement by an official of the Great Northern that only Underwood's newspaper, the Seattle Daily Times, carried "accurate, conservative and truthful" accounts of the disaster.



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I WAS a reporter on the Seattle *Daily Times* when the news came on March 1, 1910, that during the early morning a snow avalanche had swept three stalled Great Northern trains off the siding at Wellington and rolled them down a steep ravine high up in the Cascade Mountains of Washington. I was assigned to cover the story.

The Wellington disaster caused a loss of over $81,000,000 of railroad rolling stock—the worst of any wreck west of the Rockies. Most newspapers and magazines of the day reported 118 people dead as a result of the avalanche. The Great Northern Railroad puts the figure at ninety-six. In any event, the freak mishap ties for third place as the greatest train accident in the United States and first for the greatest avalanche disaster in all of North America.

WHEN I hopped the train at Seattle for Scenic I had my snowshoes along. I knew slides above that little town had blocked further railroad traffic. At Scenic I had a choice to follow twelve tortuous uphill miles of snow-covered, switch-back tracks, or break an even more perpendicular trail up through deep snow for four miles to gain the 1,500 feet between Scenic and Wellington. Wellington was 3,093 feet high. I took the short steep route.

On the hike up I reviewed background material I already had on the trains. Being snowbound on the siding for a number of days, they had already figured in the news. Rotary plows had tried to clear the line of slides, but one rotary and its three locomotives had run out of coal and become stuck in the drifts. A second was running short of fuel and had wired to Seattle for coal. Ten carloads had been made up as one of two relief trains, and had started for the blockaded section, but were stymied because of the slides beyond Scenic.

News had also come through that the menace of the snow pack and sound of slides had been a pall on the spirits of the crews and passengers in the three stalled, ill-fated trains. On February 27 a small group of section hands quit and hiked out to Scenic. The next day a passenger, John S. Rogers persuaded ten men to make the trip out with him. Believing it safer, two brothers of two of the men remained on the train. They were killed.

Train Conductor Pettit was one who had walked to Scenic with the Rogers group. When he got there he sent back a telegram. It started: "Tell pas--," but then the line had been knocked down by a slide, and the telegram was delayed. Meanwhile Pettit had already hiked back up to his charges on the snowbound local at Wellington, but had the telegram been delivered the day before, it might have saved many lives, for most of the people in the local would have tried the trip had they been assured it was not as impossible as anticipated. Pettit's telegraphed message read: "Tell passengers journey to Scenic not unusually difficult."

Unfortunately, it wasn't received and delivered in full to the passengers until after he returned to the trains . . . and the avalanche struck during that night.

I REMEMBER wet snowflakes pelting my face as I made that climb, and the reassuring sound of my snowshoes. Those snowshoes enabled me to beat the other reporters into Wellington and scoop our big rival, the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*.

I found that the worst slide was the one at Wellington. The snow cap that had roared down the mountain and smashed the three trains had been 2,000 feet high, a mile wide, and in places, fifty feet deep. From where I stood and surveyed the scene of disaster I could see where it had cut loose and swept down into the canyon. Trees three times broader than a man's shoulders were strewn about and parts of baggage cars, coaches, engines, electric motors and rotary plows were on their sides sticking grotesquely up through the snow, some all but covered by the fallen, splintered trees. I learned that some of the cars and coaches were buried forty feet deep beneath that tangle of snow, boulders and shattered forest giants.

Here and there you could hear shovels alternately slicing and spanking the snow as small groups of men dug for bodies. During that first morning they had already rescued the few people who survived the devastating avalanche, so there was no need to hurry. The many people still to be brought out would all be dead.

I went on up the draw to where the tracks on the siding had been covered by the avalanche. There had been three trains stalled on the siding. There was the lofty mountaintop on one side, the deep ravine on the other. On the spur nearest the mountainside I could see where Superintendent James O'Neill's private car, locomotive, two boxcars and three new electric motors had stood. The train had been used by O'Neill and snowbucking crews and porters. When the roaring avalanche hit, it was literally smashed on its tracks. I could see only part of it protruding through the snow. I found that O'Neill had been working down the line when the avalanche struck. His private car had its roof sliced off clean. Trainmaster Blackburn was killed instantly, his head resting on his arm as in sleep. Secretary Longcoy and a cook, Walker, suffocated as the car filled to overflowing with tons of snow. The crew were either killed outright or died under the thick blanket of snow.

There wasn't anything to see on the next two snow-covered tracks. Train No. 27, the fast mail from the east, had stood on

**Boxcars were smashed like penny matchboxes by the slide and the trees.**

John D. Wheeler Photo

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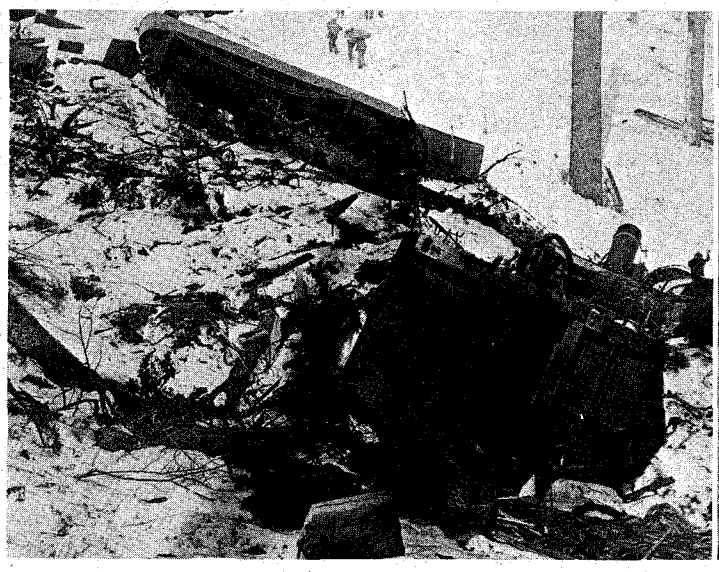

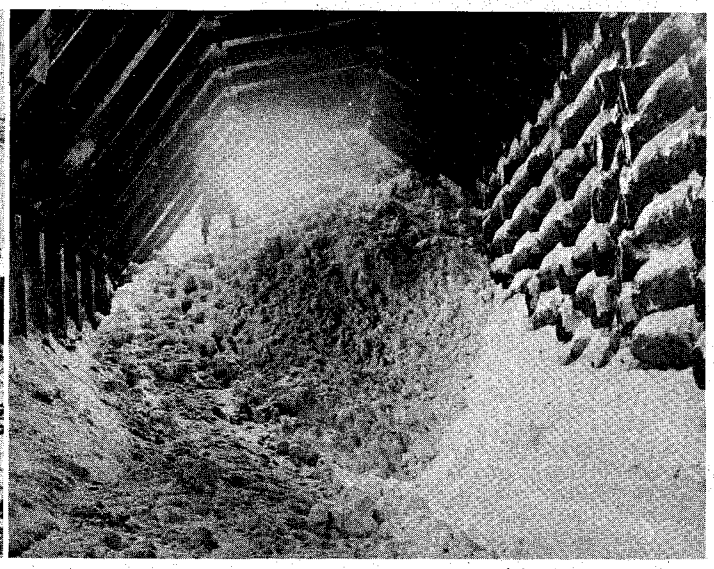

John D. Wheeler Photos

**Left, the mail car in which the nine postal clerks worked. The mail sacks were dug out of the snow. Right, one snow-shed which Rogers and his party used when they fled to Scenic before the avalanche.**

the siding nearest the ravine. It had arrived on February 25 and was composed of a combination mail-and-express car and four coaches. Nine postal clerks and about thirty foreign laborers slept in it. Train No. 25, the Spokane to Seattle local, had been spotted between the other two trains. It had arrived on February 26, and consisted of engine, baggage car, two coaches, two sleepers and an observation car. It carried sixty men, women and children. It was these two snowbound trains, and the electric motors and rotary plow that had been picked up by the avalanche and swept across the 250-foot wide plateau and hurled down the 400-foot canyon. The cars had been torn apart and scattered over five acres. Nearly all of the sleeping passengers had met death on that wild, early-morning plunge down the mountainside. A dead trainman's smashed watch fixed the time of the avalanche at 1:45. Eight of the nine mail clerks asleep in their car were crushed by two huge trees and a rotary plow that crashed through the roof. Many of the foreign laborers had been so tumbled about and dismembered they were never identified.

I TURNED from the scene and walked the short distance to the Wellington yards. The three trains had stood just west of the little station, motor shed and coal chute which were also taken down by the big slide. The yards were between them and the west portal of the tunnel. It consisted of Bailets Hotel and attached store and saloon, and a smattering of railroad shacks and bunkhouses. One of the bunkhouses had been quickly converted into a makeshift hospital for the injured. A tool shed had been set aside as a morgue for the dead.

I went into the bunkhouse to interview those I could. I learned that Alfred B. Hansel, the only mail clerk to live, was the first survivor to fight free and get back up the slope to the hotel to give the alarm. He had a narrow escape. His bunk in the mail car was so hard he had moved to the other end of the car to a softer one. The avalanche cut the car in two, crushed the end where his co-workers were, and buried the end he was in. His ribs and shoulder were broken but he managed to crawl out. As far as I know he is still alive, living near Spokane. Last of the survivors to be taken out alive was a Mrs. Starret. She had been in the snow for fourteen hours. When dug out she still had her baby snug to her breast—dead. Dead too, were her father and one of two daughters. She, too, is alive, the last I heard, living not far from Seattle.

After completing my interviews, I went to the hotel and wrote out my first story. When I was through, I took it to the little telegraph office to have it sent to Seattle. Superintendent O'Neill intercepted me. "We're not going to let you send that stuff out from here!" he bellowed.

I guessed O'Neill knew code and that I couldn't have fooled him if I'd wanted to. "You don't want me to walk back to Scenic to send in my reports, do you?" I snapped right back at him. "Besides," I told him, "I dislike yellow journalism. I'll tell my stories straight!"

O'Neill was no hero, but he could get grumbling, underpaid snow-bucking crews to working as an organized group, and unarmed he had once shamed three drunken, pistol-toting men off a train by arguing that they'd scare innocent women and children. He looked me in the eye a long moment, saw I meant what I said, and told me to go ahead and send in my story. It appeared as you can see it in the back issues of the Seattle *Times* on March 3, under the headline: "118 Victims." Underneath it said: "By J. J. Underwood. Staff representative of the *Times*. First newspaperman at the scene."

Good copy lay all over the place. For instance, after those trains had been stalled by snow slides, the passengers held an informal meeting to discuss the situation. There were only two possible courses of action. The local could be left where it was, or pulled back into the tunnel. The women were for leaving it in the open, for fear that if it were backed into the tunnel and an avalanche sealed the exit, they would smother to death from coal fumes. The men were for going back into the tunnel. The women had their way, and thus a fateful decision sealed the doom of most of those men and women.

FATE PLAYED a lot of little tricks around which the P-I men could have wrapped unembellished releases. A Mr. Davis and his small daughter were fatally lashed by steam pipes to the stump of one large tree, and eight other persons were similarly bound to another stump by truss rods and iron pipes. One mother was horribly mutilated when carried to the bottom of the canyon, and her husband received such a bad head wound, he arose and dropped dead, but their year-and-a-half-old child was found safe on top of the snow, unconcernedly babbling and playing.

I told about many of those human interest stories in my releases to the *Times*, but I kept my account straight newspaper style. Of course I cut loose with some descriptive stuff, but it was based on fact, as when I told about digging for the bodies at night. You can read exactly what I wrote: "The task of digging for the dead, especially at night, was inexpressibly eerie. Surrounded by rugged snow-capped mountains . . . haunting fear of new slides . . . men ply shovels to get to the bodies. Twinkling lanterns gleamed over the tangled masses of snow, mere specks in white . . . a spread of desolation. Uncanny, unreal, silent . . . a vast and majestic mausoleum."

I'll admit I could have sensationalized many of the stories I sent back during the week I was at Wellington. One example could have been the story told me by H. H. White, one of the survivors. He related how they held a social session the night before the slide in the smoker on the local. The women attended. Everyone sang songs, told stories and jokes. Of all the crowd who retired after midnight, only he was alive the next day.

Another one I remember, and used, was about Adolph Smith, a Pullman porter who described the electric storm at the time of the avalanche. He told me how he was pinned under timber and how he saw immense balls of fire up and down the gulch. That was long after the acetylene gas plant on the train had exploded. Smith was badly injured; he had a perfect letter "S" sliced on his forehead.

Another incident which could have been blown up out of all proportion was the one about the Italian laborers who looted the bodies. Let's see how I did

*(Continued on page 34)*



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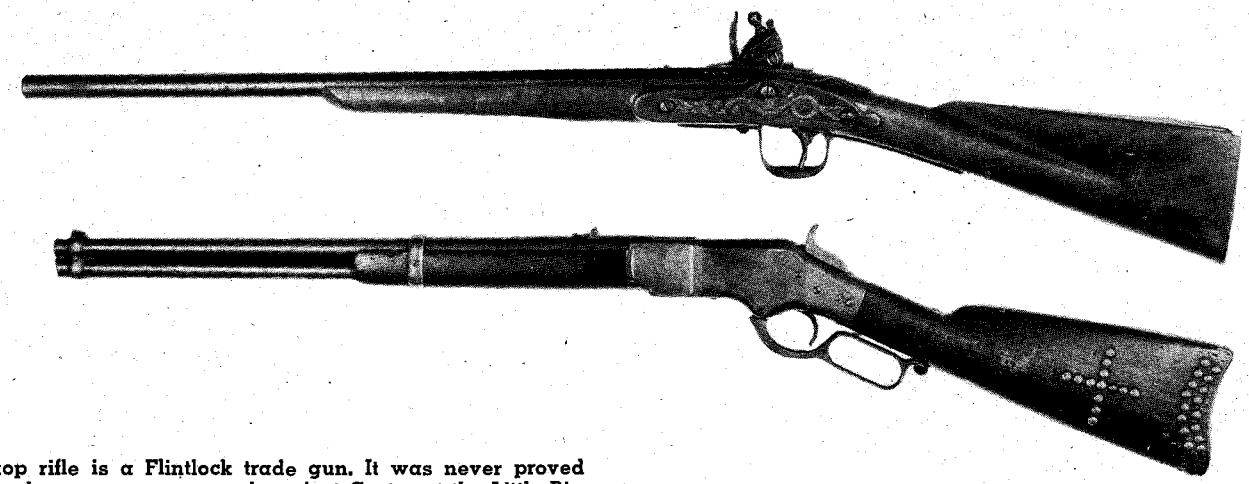

The top rifle is a Flintlock trade gun. It was never proved that such a weapon was used against Custer at the Little Big Horn. The bottom weapon is Sitting Bull's Winchester carbine Model 1866, now in Major Brotherton's Collection. This gun was surrendered to Brotherton at Fort Buford on the Missouri River on July 19, 1881. The brass tack design on the butt is reputed to have been put there by Sitting Bull himself.

Smithsonian Institution

By NORMAN B. WILTSEY

# *Indian Guns* AGAINST CUSTER

**Just what kind of firepower did Custer ride up against in that famous battle on the Little Big Horn? Here is the answer, a comprehensive and informative study that many readers have requested.**

CHARGING BEAR, a wrinkled old Oglala Sioux, spat expressively when I asked him through his grandson if it were true that most of the Indians carried Winchesters at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in June of 1876. Charging Bear was seventy-nine at the time (1938) and sick to boot; yet for a moment I caught a revealing glimpse of the fiery young warrior of old. The ancient brave set his coffee cup on the table beside his bed and waved his claw-like hands, talking rapidly.

"What'd he say?" I asked the grandson, when the old man had subsided and started drinking coffee again.

Charley Wilson smiled. "Grandfather says that's one of the big lies the white man tells about the battle—almost as bad as calling it a 'massacre' when all the Indians were doing was defending their camp against attack. He says that fully two-thirds of the 2,000 warriors in the fight had nothing but bows and arrows, lances and war-clubs. He, himself, had no gun until he killed a soldier with an arrow and took his carbine away from him. Some of the chiefs, like Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Gall, had Winchesters. Other chiefs and head men had Henry repeating rifles—but there were hardly any cartridges for either the Winchesters or the Henrys. The other warriors with guns had mostly old muzzle-loaders, along with a few Sharps breech-loaders. A few had Spencer carbines. Grandfather says The-One-That-Ran-Away (Major Reno) told the big lie about all the Indians having Winchesters to the soldier-chiefs to make an excuse for not going to help Yellow Hair (Custer) in the battle."

This vehement statement by an Indian participant in the battle, so sharply at variance with books and magazine articles I had read, started me off on a hunt for the facts. Interesting information came to light, much of it backing up Charging Bear. Here are the facts I discovered through months of research.

PRIOR TO 1858, Sioux firearms consisted of old smoothbore flintlock-type guns and a few percussion-type rifles obtained in barter with the whites. Between 1858 and 1865 the Indians swapped meat and buffalo robes for Sharps military rifles with the settlers passing up the South Platte River. In 1866, in the Fetterman fight—also misrepresented as a massacre—at Fort Phil Kearney, the Sioux acquired seventy-nine Sharps carbines and Springfield muzzle-loaders from the bodies of the slain soldiers. Two frontiersmen killed in the fight carried 16-shot Henry repeating rifles, caliber .44; these were the first repeating rifles ever taken by the Sioux. An indication of how the hostile tribesmen were fixed for firearms *before* this fight is contained in the statement of George Bird Grinnell in his book *The Fighting Cheyennes* (a few Cheyennes were engaged in the ruckus along with the Sioux) noting that "only six of the eighty-one white men bore gunshot wounds."

Grinnell goes on to say, "The Indians also had some old-fashioned cap and ball six-shooters, and during 1875 there was a good deal of trading for improved rifles." By the time of the Little Big Horn battle, "The Indians were to some extent provided with improved arms. In the Crook fight (the battle of the Rosebud, June 17th, 1876) they had captured a number of carbines from the troops . . . When the fight (the Custer battle of June 25th, 1876) began, about half of the Indians had guns, and the remainder bows . . . the guns were of many varied sorts—muzzle-loaders, Spencer carbines, old-fashioned Henry rifles, and old Sharps military rifles. The Sharps were probably the best rifles they had, except those recently captured."

In Thomas B. Marquis' book *Wooden Leg's Story,* the narrator, a Cheyenne, states:

"Guns were not plentiful among us. Most of our hunting had been done with bows and arrows. Of the Cheyennes, Two Moons and White Wolfe (chiefs) each had a repeating rifle. Some others had single-

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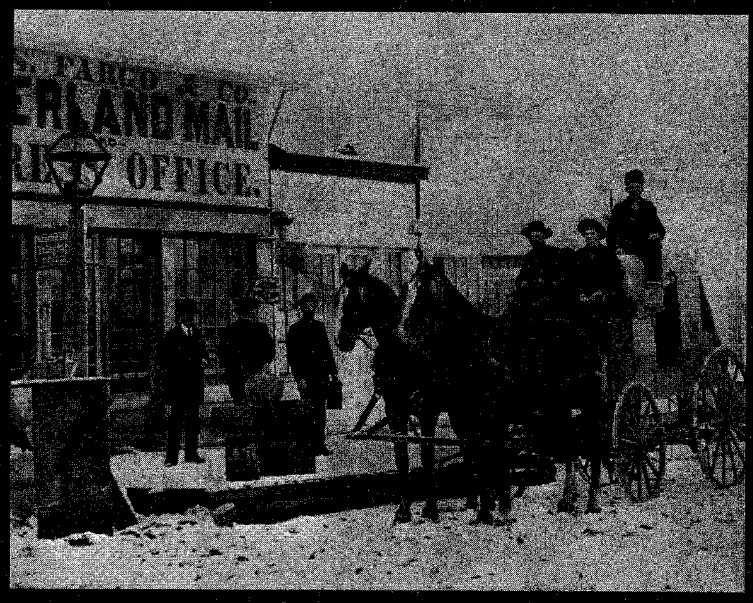


Historical Society of Montana

In front of the Wells, Fargo office in Virginia City.

Virginia City, Montana, was the richest town in the West in the 1860's. But the gold in Alder Gulch played out and the town slowly dehydrated until only shambles of its one-time glory remained. Today tourists have restored blood to its veins, and the town is booming again!

# the west's most fabulous ghost town

By GAY RANDALL

FOR OVER half a century Virginia City, Montana, lay virtually deserted, slumbering and slowly rotting away in the shadows of the sagebrush hills. After the rich gravel bars had been worked out, this bonanza town of the early gold rush days lost its rough-and-ready population and slowly dwindled into decay. Only a few families somehow hung on, and the "business district" consisted of the store and post office that served the local ranching area. Only the memories of its glorious boom-town days lingered in the collapsing plank sidewalks and disintegrating old buildings.

Virginia City was born in 1863 when Bill Fairweather discovered coarse gold nuggets in the bed of Alder Creek that panned out $10,000 to the pan. That discovery set off the biggest gold rush the Northwest has ever known. Within two months the peaceful uninhabited valley became Virginia City, where over 10,000 fortune-seekers from all walks of life stampeded.

Greenhorns and professional miners rushed in together, along with the gold-hungry, unscrupulous element that lived off the hard-working miners in any way they could. If they could not get the gold by murdering those who found it, they held up the stages carrying it out of town. These robbers and murderers killed some 190 men in the first six months of the town's existence.

Others—the gamblers—found the town's gaming tables effective means of getting gold from those who mined it. With them came whisky-runners and hurdy-gurdy girls by the hundreds, all out to get gold the easy way. Honest work was a dirty word to them. Within a few months Virginia City was occupied by the toughest, most corrupt assemblage ever collected in one spot anywhere in the world.

Like all other gold rush camps Virginia City's prosperity lasted only a few years, but during those bonanza years history was made. An estimated $300,000,000 in placer gold was taken out of Alder Gulch during the four years of hardship, hilarity and murder between 1863 and 1867.

HISTORY HAS recorded the feats of the nine men who had the courage, endurance and pride to organize the West's first vigilante group. These men were Montana Territory's first law body, and within a few weeks brought death by hanging to the most unscrupulous murdering band the country has ever known—"The Innocents," so called from the password they used as a means of identification among themselves.

These outlaws, headed by a legally elected sheriff, Henry Plummer, were so well organized they knew about every gold strike and gold shipment occurring in the region, including both Virginia City and its sister camp, Bannack.

The vigilantes knew full well that it would take careful planning and life-endangering work to wipe out so well an organized band. They swore themselves to absolute secrecy, for had "The Innocents" learned of their intentions, Plummer's outlaws would have cut down their opponents as a matter of course. Meeting one night in the back room of a store owned by John Kenna, the vigilantes chose Paris Pfouts, president; Wilbur Sanders, official prosecutor; and Captain James Williams, executive officer.

One of the by-laws of the organization was: "The only punishment that shall be



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inflicted by this commission is death."

They struck quickly. Within a few weeks half-a-dozen known "Innocents" had been hanged after quick trials conducted before the captured outlaws. John X. Beidler, one of the vigilantes, described many of the hangings in his journal. A solemn council was held by the vigilantes, and the leader of their band addressed his followers, saying, "All those in favor of hanging these men step to the right side of the road and those in favor of letting them go stand to the left. You have heard all about these men and I want you to vote according to your own conscience. If you think they ought to hang or go free, vote for it."

The vigilantes did not know that Sheriff Plummer was the leader of the "Innocents" until Red Yager spilled the beans. About to be hanged, Yager said he had no fear of dying if the others of the "Innocents" met the same fate, so he gave the committee the names of a dozen men who were king-pins in the gang, including Plummer.

William F. Saunders of the vigilantes lived next door to Plummer. On an appointed night, the vigilantes stormed Plummer's house, surprising him in bed without a gunbelt on. He offered no resistance, but turned ghastly white. The most desperate of the road agents, noted for his agility, his panther-like quickness, his unfailing vigilance and deadly aim, had been caught napping.

It seems curious that Plummer, who planned the atrocities that had terrorized the entire region, should prove to be as cowardly as he was when faced with death. He recognized the voice of his neighbor, Saunders, and begged piteously for his life.

Saunders' answer was curt. "It is useless," he said, "you are to be hanged. You cannot feel harder about it than I do, but I cannot help it if I would."

The outlaw then became servile, cajoling, loathsome in his abject and abandoned cowardice. He groveled. He begged. He asked to be chained in the most miserable cabin for life. He offered to leave the land forever and when he saw his judges still unmoved, he fell to his knees weeping and declaring that he was too wicked to die.

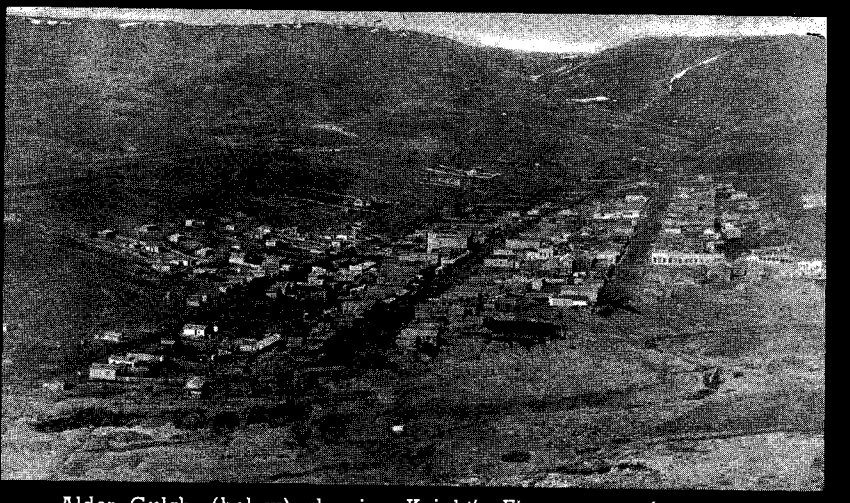
Plummer was the nineteenth road agent to be hanged. With his death the gang's backbone was broken. The more fortunate of the yet uncaptured outlaws fled; the less fortunate were rounded up and dispatched with a hangman's rope. Justice and security had finally come to the Northwest.

But the life's-blood of Virginia City was its gold, and the gold did not last. Almost as quickly as the town had burst into existence it faded, leaving its hectic history carved on the signs and mutilations of the false-fronted stores. It became just another Montana ghost town with a fabulous past and no visible future.

THEN in 1946 Charles Bovey, a big, jovial wheat farmer and state legislator who had served two terms as assemblyman and ten years as senator in the state capital at Helena, came along. Bovey had always had a passion for preserving old things. When he saw one of these old buildings being torn down for firewood, his passion was aroused. He just couldn't stand to see the old historic landmarks being wrecked. So he immediately bought the building and began to negotiate for all the others on the lower end of Wallace Street.

Above, "The Toughest Town in the West" was located high in southwestern Montana's Tobacco Root Mountains. Notice the scant growth on the hills behind the town. Below, Virginia City, Montana, as seen from the air.

Historical Society of Montana



Alder Gulch, (below) showing Knight's Flume, one of the greatest gold producers the West has ever known.

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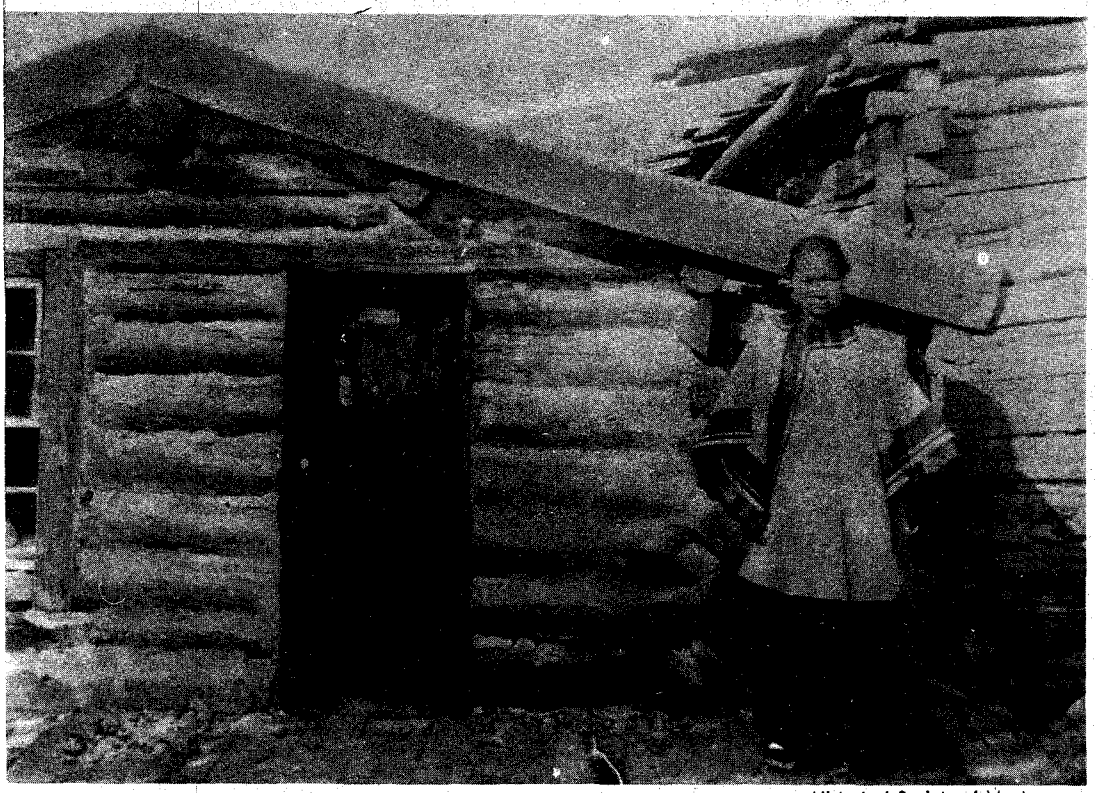

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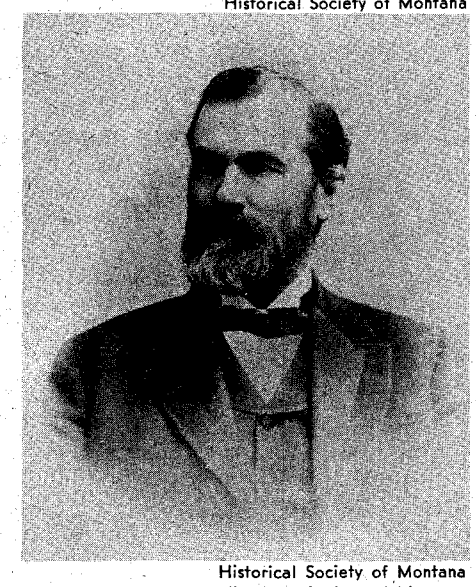
**Left, top, Chinese Mary, Virginia City's laundress in the "Good Old Days." Center, left, the interior of the reconstructed Wells, Fargo office. The life-sized mannequins depict the activities of the 1860 gold rush days. Center, right, William F. Saunders. Bottom, hydraulic mining in Alder Gulch.**

Photo by the Author



Historical Society of Montana

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This man with a passion for preserving history began the big job of restoring Virginia City. Big trucks began rolling into the town with cargo the like of which old-timers had never dreamed. All who wanted to work were hired, and they began combing the countryside, buying everything old that could be found. Attics, barns and dump grounds yielded an unbelievable number of antiques. Today the buildings are fully restored and filled to overflowing with the relics of Montana's roaring and hectic past.

But nowhere is there any indication that Virginia City is a museum. It is just an old famous ghost town that has been restored to its authentic state of nearly a hundred years ago. Everything is for the enjoyment of all who come to see it, and although Bovey owns most of what was Virginia City in the 1860's, everything is free to the public. That's the way Bovey wants it to be.

Today Virginia City's main street is bustling with people from all over the country, angling for shots, but they are not like those rough-whiskered gunmen and painted hurdy-gurdy girls of ninety years ago. Today's strangers are tourists, excited, wide-eyed, with cameras, taking thousands of shots at the famous old buildings. Some days in summer over 3,000 sightseers roam the planked sidewalks, peeking into the open doorways of the old buildings, pointing at the life-like figures with handle-bar mustaches standing behind the rough board counters.

In the general store with its shelves of authentic merchandise of the 1860's can be seen all the essentials for setting up a frontier mining camp—picks, shovels, tallow candles, water buckets, an occasional chamber pot, washbowls and pitchers, the familiar old hand coffee grinders and plug tobacco cutters.

Out on the street the only thing to mar the scenery of yesteryear are the solid rows of automobiles the tourists have parked at the hitch racks where freight wagons used to stand. However



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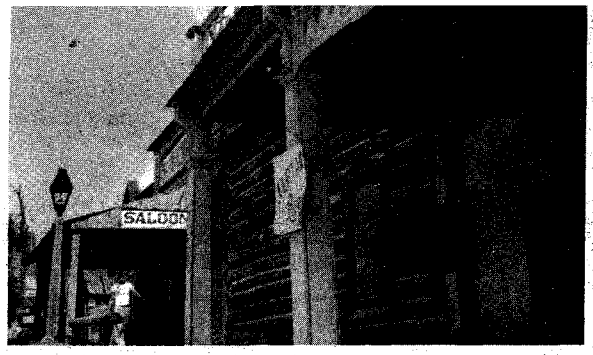


The Virginia City opera house has been restored to appear just as it did during the bonanza days. The Virginia City Players, a professional stock company, enact the favorite plays every night during the summer.

Helen S. O'Brien Photo
Courtesy the Author

Shave anyone? The reconstructed barber shop is furnished exactly as it was in the 1860's.

all is not lost, for parked at the sidewalk's edge in front of the old Fairweather Hotel is a Wells, Fargo stagecoach, grim and weather-beaten, a reminder of the early days of the taming of the West. There is no rough weather-tanned driver in the front seat, nor his companion, the shotgun express messenger, beside him, but hundreds of youngsters and oldsters alike climb aboard, up into that front seat, to have their pictures taken by a doting parent or friend.

The hotel is completely restored; if you are lucky, you can rent a room for the night, just to say "I slept there." Every piece of furniture is the real thing. The small rugs are hand-braided. An old marble top commode accommodates the china washbowl and pitcher and, of course, the slop jar has its own receptacle underneath. Even the chamber pot is under the bed. The gold and flowered wallpaper is of mid-nineteenth century design.

Looking into the Chinese laundry with its old, battered ironing board and the round-bellied stove with its rack of big, heavy smoothing-irons hugging the specially built stove sides, everything seems as real as if Sing Lee himself had just stepped out back for a minute to bring in the wash from the line.

In the blacksmith shop the smoke-blackened forge stands in the corner. Around the anvil are the tools of the smithy. Wagon wheels and iron tires, horseshoes, doubletrees and neck-yokes are all there, waiting to be repaired. A much used and battered ox-yoke hangs from the ceiling.

In the barber shop are the fixtures of the day—old shaving mugs; a rack of fancy straight razors; a wooden, plush-upholstered barber chair made realistic with its seated mannequin customer all lathered up and waiting for the fancy-vested barber posed with a razor in his hand.

All the many other buildings along the street are open for inspection, including the assay office with its crude crucible and the dressmaker's shop displaying a

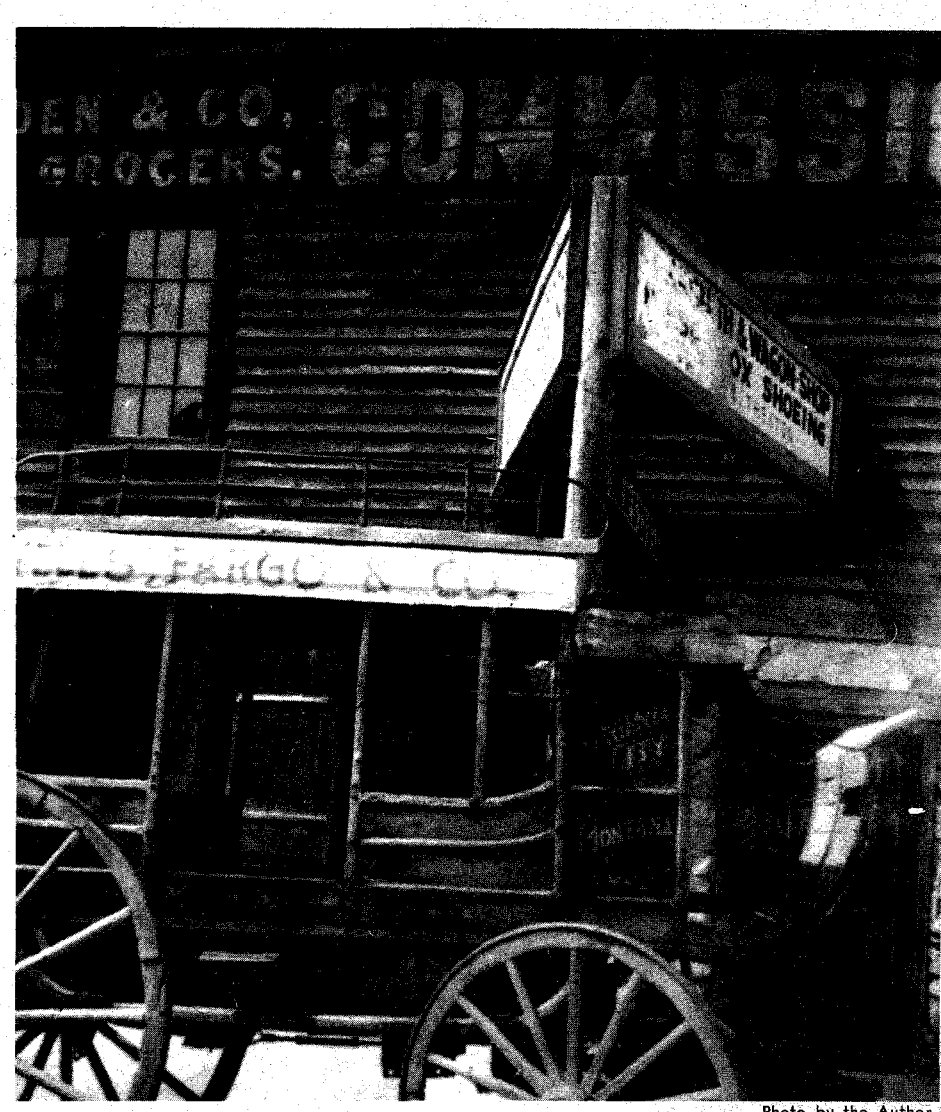


Photo by the Author

The old Wells, Fargo stagecoach.



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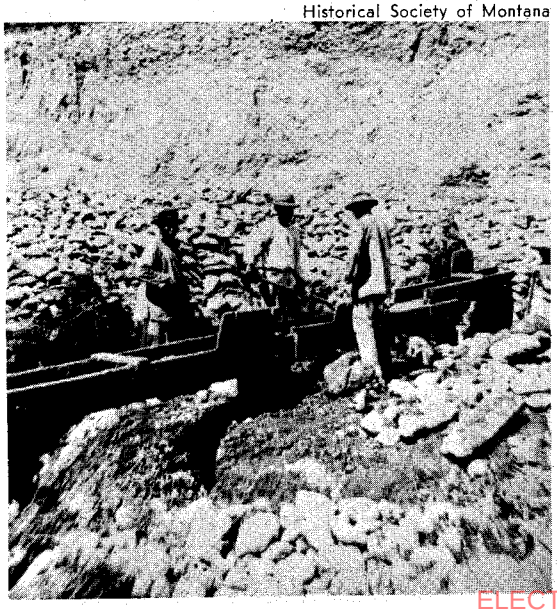
Photo Courtesy the Author

**Above, the Virginia City blacksmith shop. Below, center, the last of the old freight wagons that hauled supplies from Corrine to Virginia City in 1863-64. Bottom, Chinese miners working a sluice box.**

Photo by the Author

Historical Society of Montana



whalebone-stayed corset like great-grandmother used to wear.

In the brewery the original vats and equipment are all intact. The storage room has been converted into a small beer parlor, complete with an electric roll player-piano for dancing.

AT THE Wells, Fargo depot an old-time scene is portrayed by lifelike mannequins. The express agent is talking to two dancehall girls; the Pony Express rider is sitting on a bed roll looking on. These replicas are dressed in actual clothing of the nineteenth century.

On the corner the original *Montana Post* building still stands, furnished with a hand press that's still in working order. It is sometimes used today to turn out special Virginia City posters in quaint old-lettered type.

The old Bale of Hay Saloon hums with activity. The front part has been set aside for display; its steel-disc music boxes have been repaired and are in good working order. A quarter in the slot brings forth the strains of tunes like *Nellie Gray, That Saucy Little Bird on Nellie's Hat,* and many other old-time favorites.

At the bar the visitors line up with their feet on the brass rail where the barkeep with a real handle-bar mustache presides in front of the bullet-scarred back bar. Along the walls are an assortment of early day music boxes—stereoscopes, electric pianos and organs, everything. On the walls, in heavy gilt frames, hang full length reproductions of the soft, pink-skinned beauties of the day.

The old opera house sits at the lower end of Wallace Street. Its dim interior is lighted by oil lamps hanging from the ceiling, emanating an atmosphere of the by-gone days when the opera house was the center of the town's entertainment. The Virginia City Players, a professional stock company, put on their act nightly during the summer, including in their repertoire such gems as, "The Face on the Barroom Floor," "Madame Butterfly," and others.

MOST OF the sixty regular employees in Virginia City are natives, the last of the area's old-timers whose roots are deeply imbedded in their native soil. They are proud of the part they are taking in protecting and preserving the town whose brief heyday was as colorful and exciting as any place in the West.

It is estimated that at least one-half of Montana's 3,000,000 yearly visitors come to the state to see Virginia City. It now rivals in interest Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks.

With the people of the state and local community Charles Bovey is tops. Among his projects are included the organization of the Historic Landmark Society of Montana. Many of its members help in the contributions to Virginia City's restoration and maintenance, and also make historical studies of other locations.

Charles Bovey says he has no idea how much time and money he has spent on Virginia City. He has collected so many relics he does not know where to display them all, and has storehouses full of everything from fire engines, steam tractors and the first Chickering piano to come up the Missouri to old Fort Benton, to a package of English handmade needles, an old miner's lamp and a Model N 1906 Ford.

But he feels his projects are worthwhile. And as long as people continue to have an interest in their heritage and come by the thousands to visit Virginia City, he will have proof that his theory is sound.



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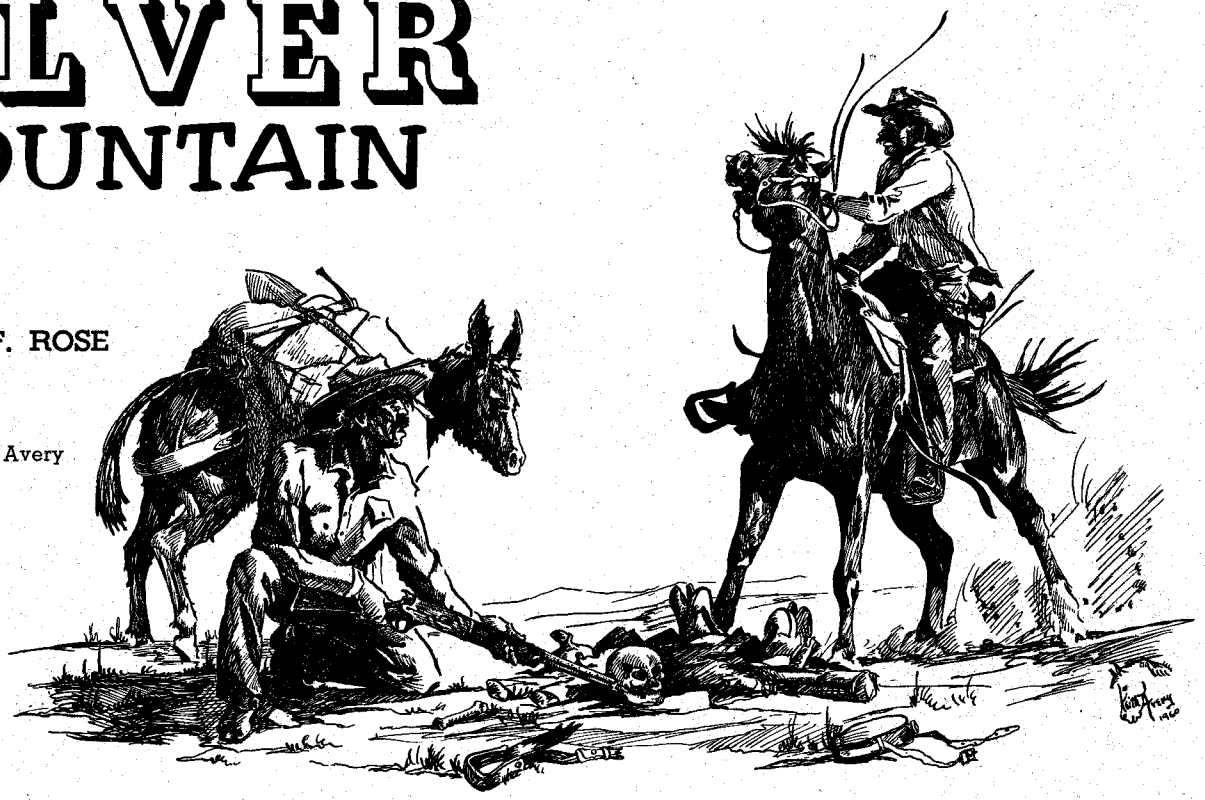
# SILVER MOUNTAIN

By MILTON F. ROSE

Illustrated by Keith Avery



" . . . the dead embers of a great fire, partly burned human bones, and remnants of three saddles . . . "

**A mountain, high in the rugged Arizona Rockies, is rumored to be so rich in precious metal a man can pick enough up with his fingers to make him wealthy for a lifetime!**

OVER A hundred years ago Apache Indians living in an area that is now the San Carlos Indian Reservation in eastern Arizona began using bullets moulded from silver. The discovery of the bullets was made by a party of travelers passing through the region who were shot at by Indians. A bullet lodged in a saddle bag and another was dug from a sack of cornmeal. More silver bullets over the next three or four years convinced settlers that silver was plentiful in the region. The hostile attitude of the Apaches, however, made it extremely dangerous for anyone to enter the area and no search for the silver was made until late in the 1870's.

Meanwhile, sometime during the 1860's, a Mexican named Encinas was captured by the Apaches. He lived with the Indians for about seven years before finally escaping and making his way back to Mexico. He said he had helped the Apaches gather the silver and melt it down into bullets. He described what appeared to be a whole mountain where small and large nuggets of native silver covered the ground. He also told of a large vein of the metal that slashed through the mountain.

In 1890 a party of Mexicans, headed by Pedro Encinas, a nephew of the man who had been an Apache slave, set out from Sonora, Mexico, with a map the uncle had drawn from memory. They also carried a letter from the Governor of Sonora to W. J. Ellis, acting Indian agent for the San Carlos Reservation, which had been established after Encinas escaped from his captors. The reservation encompassed the entire area shown on the map.

The agent gave the Mexicans permission to search for the silver, with the understanding that if it were found on reservation land, exploration would cease and the expedition return.

Ellis told the Mexicans that a very rich silver deposit had been found on what had once been part of the reservation. But the land had been turned back to the settlers of the region and was now privately owned. Much silver had been picked up on the surface. It was known as the Stonewall Jackson Mine.

Encinas told Ellis that he knew of this mine and had spoken of it to his uncle before he died. His uncle, however, had declared it was not the same lode of silver, for he too knew of the Stonewall Jackson which had been found while he was still an Indian slave. The uncle said the silver mountain was much richer, the veins bigger and the area more extensive. The Stonewall Jackson was at least seventy miles from the mountain of silver, in an easterly direction.

L. K. Thompson of Salt River, a brother-in-law of Pedro Encinas, said the expedition had found the mountain, but it proved to be on the reservation. They took samples of the silver, which was abundant, and returned to the reservation headquarters honoring their pledge to abandon the treasure.

While at the silver mountain, and later as they returned to the reservation office, the party saw many signs of massacre. In one place they found the remains of several men, with cooking utensils and equipment scattered about, evidence of treachery by the Reservation Apaches who were then supposed to be under government control.

The party reported to Ellis that it had found what it was looking for but did not give an exact description of the site. Not until they were permitted to work the mountain would the Mexicans reveal the location.

The Mexicans returned to Sonora and Thompson, who had accompanied them, came back to Arizona, the only man outside of Mexico who knew of the location. Thompson was a half-breed Mexican who had settled in the Salt River Valley some years before the expedition left Sonora. He had gone back to visit relatives and was invited along.

AFTER MANY months of searching I located Thompson in Arizona. He was then an old man. I have never been convinced that the story he told me was the truth. I had the feeling that he was covering up; yet he may have given it to me straight. Here is what he told me:

The mountain of silver was not on the San Carlos Indian Reservation but forty miles east of there on the White Mountain Reservation, a comparatively small area. He said it was about three-quarters of a mile inside the reservation fence. Since the reservation was closed to all mining, he saw no reason, he said, to go back to it. The massacred party of white men had built an arraster in which to mill the ore and this fact, he believed, had angered the Apaches. He was sure

*(Continued on page 44)*



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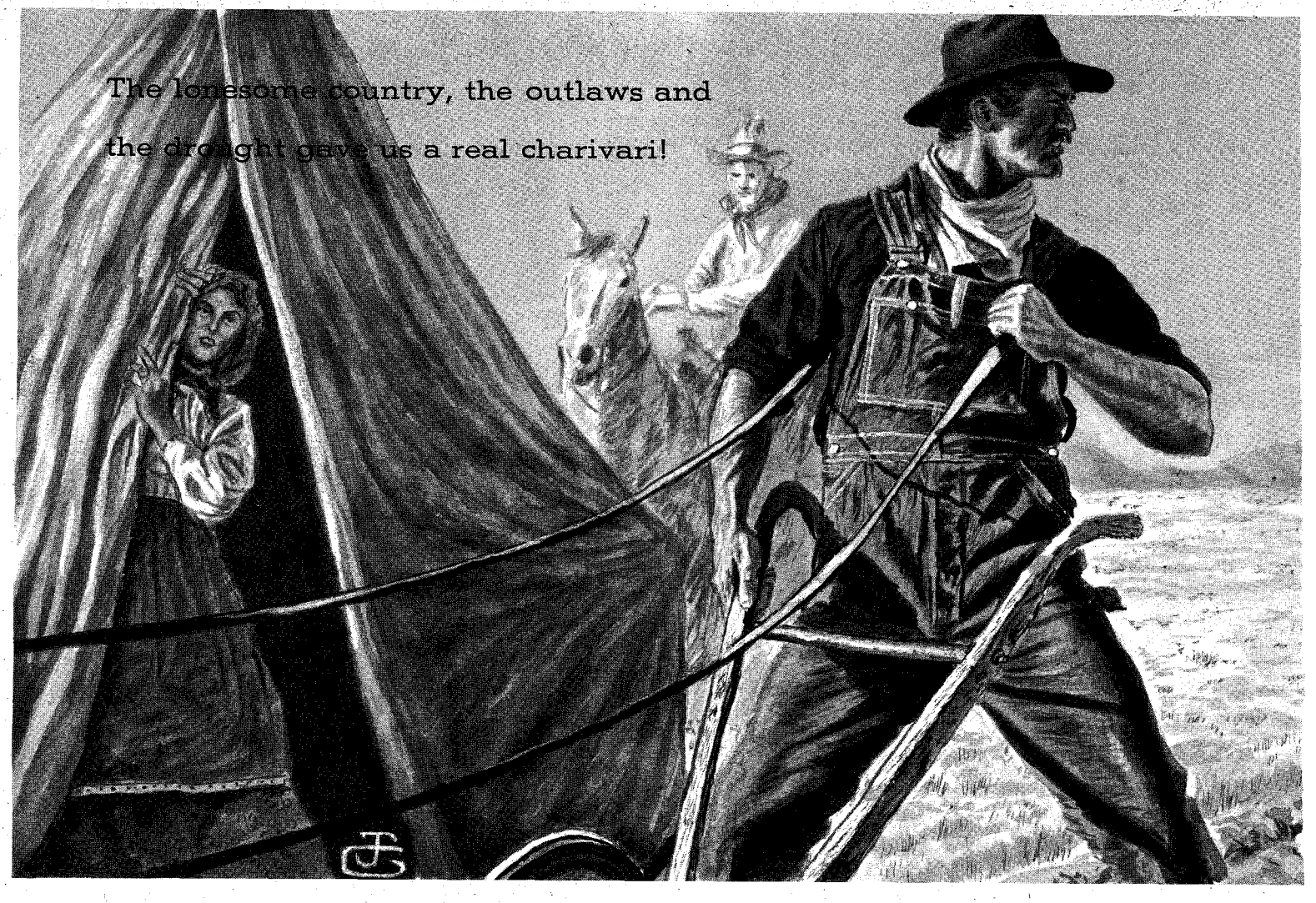


# Homestead

By MRS. B. A. (MYRTLE) MITCHELL

as told to RUTH RUSSELL

ON A mild May morning in 1911 there were no newly-weds with more adventurous spirits and high hopes than Burt and I when we set off in a covered wagon from western Oklahoma to our new home in the eastern part of the state. I was seventeen, Burt was twenty-two, and we could not have been happier had we just staked a newly discovered gold mine.

The roads were narrow, rocky and primitive, and it took eleven days to make the trip. We traveled through the settled prairie country of newly planted fields dotted with crudely built shacks and half dugouts as far as the eye could see. But an uneasiness possessed us when we reached the mountainous region of timber beyond the town of Duncan, for the country there was unsettled, and outlawry—robbery, horse thievery, even murder—was common in the territory.

Toward the end of each day we sought a camping spot near a stream of water. Usually we cooked hoe cakes, bacon, eggs and coffee for supper, then heated water for baths.

On a dark night, as we were dozing to sleep, the stillness was broken by the sound of an approaching horse. I was frozen with fear when the rider reached our camp and a brusque voice called:

"Hullo! Anybody there?"

"Horse thieves, I'll bet," I whispered to Burt, sensing his sudden uneasiness.

"Aw, naw, just a traveler, I guess," he said in pretended bravado.

"Hullo!" the traveler again called.

"Hey!" Burt replied, sticking his head outside the wagon.

"Any water around here, fella?"

"Yeh—over there—behind the wagon is a stream."

"Thought I'd bed down here. Where you headin'?"

"East Oklahoma."

"My country. I'm from Porum."

"Dear God help us," I prayed.

Porum was the home of Belle Starr and other outlaws. Perhaps this man was one, too. How easy it would be for him to murder us and take possession of our horses, despite the .22 rifle I gripped tightly, crouching in the back of the wagon.

As I heard him unharness his horse, my fear subsided.

"Surely," I reasoned, "if he were a horse thief he would hurriedly execute his purpose and go on his way."

Soon enough, quiet settled over the camp. Burt fell asleep, and when I heard loud snoring from the outside I gained a sense of safety.

We woke to find a rising sun, the stranger gone, and our horses still safely hitched to young oak trees. Bird song filled the air while we bowed our heads in the usual morning prayer before breakfast, grateful for God's safekeeping.

In the early evening we passed the south edge of the Comanche Indian Reservation of which Quanah Parker was then chief. The view was enchanting



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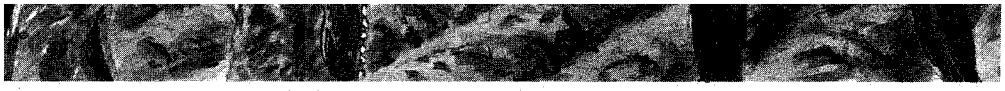

**"But right now you stop that plowin,'" said the spokesman, rubbing his gun holster suggestively.**

# Honeymoon

Illustrated by Joe Grandee

—a rolling prairie of swaying green grass and hundreds of Indian ponies, with faintly visible teepees painted with colorful designs in the background.

Four young Indian braves with long braided hair, riding blanketed ponies, met us on the road with stoic expressions. Wearing moccasins, silver jewelry, fringed leather jackets, and wide felt hats, they made a unique picture while stopped beside the road to let us pass. Inevitably, I began trembling, recalling the stories of Indian atrocities in earlier pioneer days.

Two days later, near the edge of a small shabby town, a huge sign in bold words confronted us:

WHITE MAN DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON YOU HERE!

It was then near nightfall but there was no alternative but to move onward, for the horses were thirsty and we had passed no streams near enough to turn back. We trusted that water was waiting beyond this inhospitable town.

On reaching the one street of the business area of crude wooden stores, unusually black Negroes on both sides of the street turned toward us in stony silence. Others emerged from stores, from behind buildings, and it seemed, from out of nowhere, standing like statues as we jolted onward. I searched the solemn faces for at least one faint smile, but in vain.

"Please hurry, Burt," I urged, suppressing tears.

"We can't hurry. The horses are more tired than we are," he said wearily.

It seemed an eternity before we were well away from the town, settled down near a stream of water.

ON THE afternoon of the eleventh day we crossed over a rough mountain trail and came in sight of a beautiful green valley two miles wide, stretching from east to west and bisected by the gleaming rails of the Ft. Smith and Western Railroad which paralleled a stream of running water. Hundreds of fat cattle grazed placidly inside and outside a large fenced area flanked by a long cluster of tall trees on the west.

"There it is!" cried Burt, who had seen the land only once before, his face alight with pride. "That's our section fenced in!"

Weak though I was with fever, I shared his enthusiasm. This was even more beautiful than I had dreamed, and it seemed *ours,* even though we had only made one payment on the land.

We pitched camp at the foot of the mountain on the south, near some oak and hickory trees. At dusk we retired; then after the dark closed in, the wail of coyotes wafted from the distant hills. At dawn we were awakened by the rumble of a passing train.

After breakfast we had set off with two tin pails each for water when a friendly "hello" was heard from the west.

*(Continued on page 46)*



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# WAS WYATT EARP REALLY A DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL?

Wyatt Earp, who has become controversial since his fictionalization by television, did serve in both Dodge City and Tombstone as a legally appointed deputy marshal. TRUE WEST presents the proof with these findings of a revealing probe into government records and the words of a man who knew Earp personally.

By GARY ROBERTS

THE QUESTION of whether Wyatt Earp was a genuine, bona fide U.S. marshal or an imposter has been asked many times and still is being asked by readers of TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES.

Just what are the facts that lie behind the mystery of the badge Earp wore while in Tombstone?

Some are of the opinion that doubt about Earp's legal status grew out of Stuart N. Lake's biography, *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal.* Although Lake may have gone astray on some of his material, he can hardly be blamed for the story that Earp was a fraud, legally at least. There are more than twenty books bearing copyright dates from 1907 to 1959 and somewhere in most of them will be found a hint that Earp's status quo may have been in doubt. Only one, however, comes right out and says such was the case. The others make some mention of it but never go so far as to seriously question Wyatt's legal status.

It is true that there is no record at the Department of Justice in Washington to show that Earp was ever a U.S. marshal. But that proves nothing. Back in the late seventies U.S. marshals were thicker than jungle bums at an I.O.O.F. picnic down by the railroad tracks. They came and went, and how long each stayed on the job depended usually on how many politicians he knew. No accurate record of the appointments was kept until along toward the turn of the century when the business of selecting marshals was systematized.

One night last fall, I was reading Pat Jahns' biography of Doc Holliday. In his book Jahns quotes a telegram from Marshal Crawley P. Dake to Acting Attorney General S. F. Phillips. This telegram, while it calls no names, is quite evidently a short report on the O. K. Corral fight and Dake speaks of "my deputies." This could only have reference to the Earps.

After having read this I wrote a letter to the Department of Justice, to see if this telegram was authentic. The letter was referred to the National Archives for an answer. From a report written in 1941 by Frank D. McAllister, an employee of the National Archives, I began to comprehend the true picture.

McALLISTER'S first paragraph explains why there is no record of Earp in the Justice Department. Until 1896 the Department of Justice did not keep a systematic record of deputy U. S. Marshals. Some were recorded but a larger number were not. In 1896 the fee system was abolished and this was changed. While there is no reference to Wyatt Earp by name, there are several references to the Earp brothers.

The earliest of these references is dated November 17, 1881. It is a letter from S. F. Phillips to Crawley P. Dake concerning one of Dake's deputies, a "Mr. Earp" of Tombstone. According to this letter Earp ". . . is disposed rather to quarrel with the Territorial authorities than to cooperate with them."

On December 5, 1881, Marshal Dake sent the following letter to Attorney General Phillips, in connection with the gunfight at the O. K. Corral:

> ". . . the Sheriff of Cochise County in which Tombstone is situated, attempted to interfere with the Messrs. Earp and their assistants (Marshal Dake's deputies) but the attempt has completely failed. The Earps have rid Tombstone and neighborhood of the presence of this outlaw element. They killed several cowboys in Tombstone recently and the Sher-



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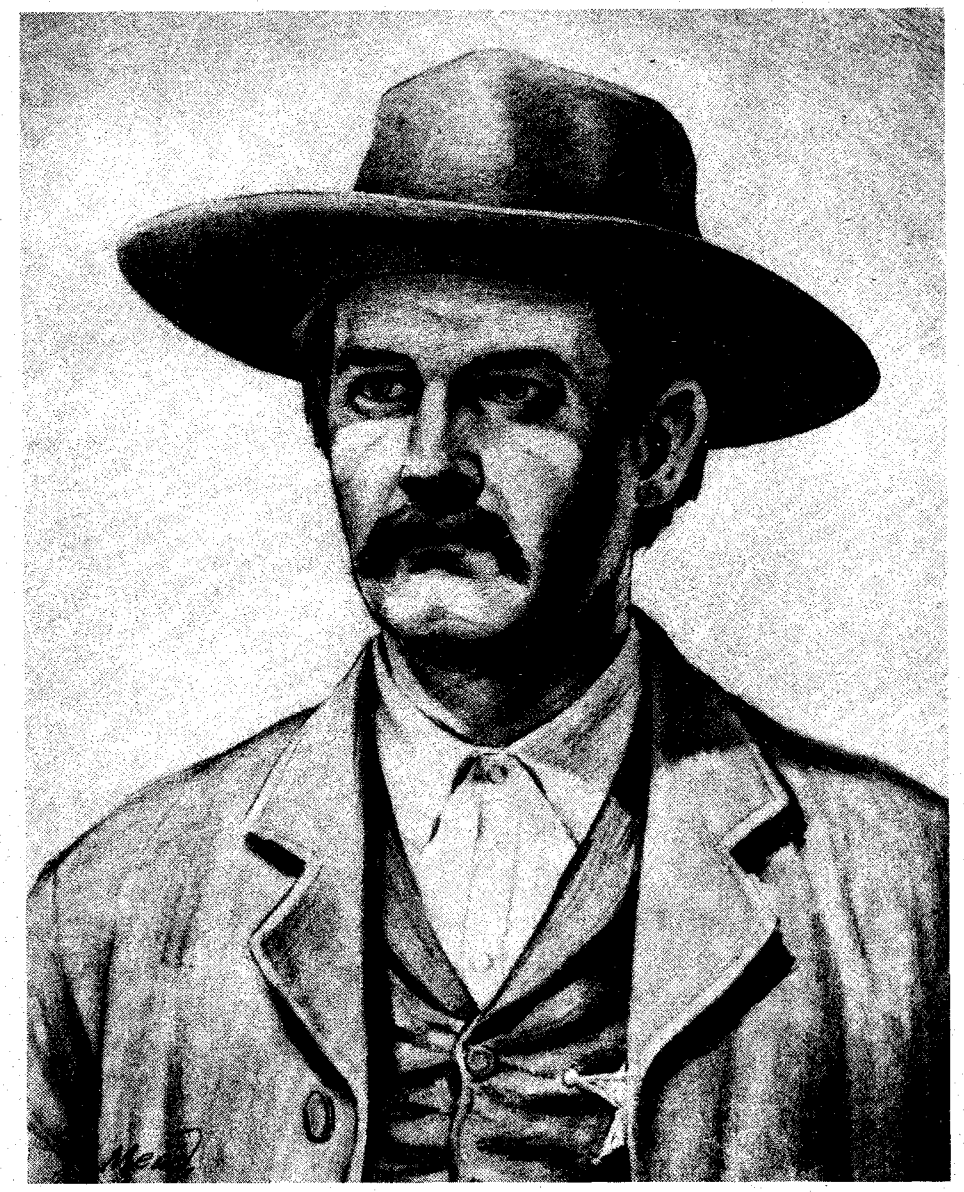

**Ben Carlton Mead's portrait of Wyatt Earp, painted by the artist for the M. H. Fitzpatrick collection.**

iff's faction had my deputies arrested—and after a protracted trial my deputies were vindicated and publicly complimented for their bravery in driving this outlaw element from this part of our territory. The Magistrate discharged my deputies on the ground that when they killed Clanton and the McLowerys they were in the legitimate discharge of their duties as my officers. Hereafter my deputies will not be interfered with in hunting down stage robbers, mail robbers, train robbers, cattle thieves, and all that class of murdering *banditti* on the border.

"I am proud to report that I have some of the best and bravest men in my employ in this hazardous business—men who are trusted and tried, and who strike fear into the hearts of these outlaws." *(Department of Justice Files,* Arizona)

According to this letter all of the Earps were federal lawmen. One might even say that Doc Holliday was also a deputy U. S. Marshal.

Earlier in 1881 (November 28th) Acting Territorial Governor John J. Gosper wrote a letter to Marshal Dake about the problem in Tombstone. The letter read:

"Another cause of the troubles alluded to is the fact that the present Sheriff of Cochise County and one of the Earp brothers, not your deputy, but a brother to the latter being in some matter connected with the police force for the City of Tombstone, are candidates or aspirants for the sheriffship at the polls another season; the rivalry between them having extended into a strife to secure influence and aid from all quarters has led them and the particular friends of each to sins of commission and omission greatly at the cost of peace and property." (Enclosed in letter to S. F. Phillips from C. P. Dake, December 8, 1881. *Department of Justice Files,* Arizona.)

Anyone with a reasonable knowledge of the history of Tombstone will immediately recognize the brother spoken of as Wyatt Earp.

In any of these reports the deputy marshal Earp could have been Virgil, Wyatt, Morgan, or all three. According to the District Clerk's office in Tucson, Virgil Earp took the oath of office as a deputy U. S. marshal on November 27, 1879. If, as the letters seem to indicate, Morgan and Wyatt were federal lawmen, their appointments must have come sometime in 1881.

On March 18, 1882, Morgan Earp was murdered while playing pool with Bob Hatch in Hatch's billiard parlor. There is nothing in the newspaper account to tell us anything about Morgan's official status at the time of his death. Although the records are missing, the *Subject Index of the Department of Justice* lists a letter which tells of the murder of Deputy U. S. Marshal Earp. Only Morgan Earp was killed while in Tombstone, so this letter evidently referred to Morgan.

In April of 1882 the Department of Justice sent a Special Agent to investigate the conditions of Marshal Dake's office. In his report the Agent stated:

"He (Dake) retains upon his force as Deputy one of the Earp boys of Tombstone who is now an outlaw and with others is hiding in the mountains awaiting their time for a big fight in Tombstone." *(Department of Justice Files of the Appointment Clerk,* "Confidential Report of S. R. Martin, Special Agent, April

*(Continued on page 54)*



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Don Ashbaugh Photo

**Betty Oneal today. The fireplug once stood on a corner of Main Street.**

# Wild old Days!

## Silky Sullivan--1857 Model

By FRANK MASON

THE HUGE crowd of 5,000—huge for that year of 1857—assembled around the half-mile track on the outskirts of Austin, Texas, either moaned in agony or screamed like mad, depending on which horse their money was riding, as the field on the back stretch began to string out, with the favorite ten lengths back. It was a six-horse race but actually only two entries counted. The others were in there just for the fun of it, to add color and to make it something more than a two-horse contest. The two horses on which all the money was wagered were a little sorrel mare named Blaze and a recent import from Kentucky named Darby.

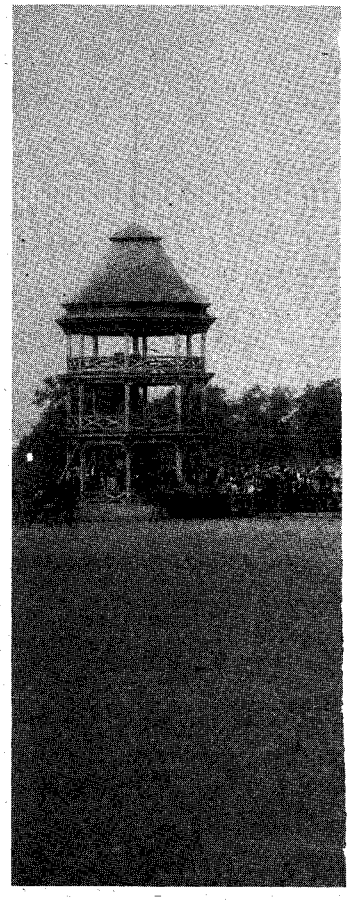
The distance was a mile-and-a-quarter and at the half-mile post it looked like Blaze had it. The Darby backers were about ready to start cutting their own throats.

The most concerned of all was Darby's owner, Captain Creed Taylor, noted rancher and turfman, who had bet $10,000 on his horse, plus 100 mules and 100 bales of hay. The mules and the hay he could afford to lose, but not the $10,000, which was every dollar in cash he had to his name. To make what appeared to be another defeat all the more difficult to swallow, Taylor had lost $5,000 to Blaze's owner, Colonel Tom Bales of Waco, in another recent race which Bales had won with his highly-touted Blaze. Taylor had raced his best horse on that occasion, and had only recently acquired Darby in an attempt to win back some of his losses. The prospect was very dismal as the distance between Blaze and Darby gradually lengthened.

COLONEL BALES had insisted on putting up the 100 mules and the 100 bales of hay on the spot. Now, within sight of the race crowd, 200 mules in a corral were getting acquainted and the 200 bales of hay were stacked ten high near the paddock. It was a winner-take-all proposition.

Backers of the little mare went wild as she turned the three-quarters post, a sure winner in their minds.

Taylor draped himself over the rail and groaned at the thought of $10,000 going down the drain, and a couple of thousand others groaned with him. He was blaming himself for having bought a horse without learning more about it. The reports he had received on Darby were excellent. He was Kentucky bred, from the best of stock, and had a fine record. His owner from whom Taylor had acquired him for $3,000 had said something about his being a slow starter. "But good heavens," thought Taylor,





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"does he have to run a mile before he gets under way?" Darby was still fifteen lengths back, trailing the entire field of cow ponies.

"Ah-hum!" said a voice to Taylor's right. "Looks like you lose again, Captain."

Colonel Tom Bales was grinning like a cat with a mouse in its teeth.

Taylor's eyes followed the leader as the events of the past six months passed before his eyes. He realized how reckless he had been in trying to obtain a horse that would beat Bales' little mare, conceded to be the swiftest thing on four feet known to the racing fraternity. When he had last been defeated by Bales he had not known which way to turn to obtain such a horse. He wanted the fleetest thing money could buy. There were a number of good runners on the market, the best of which was said to be Darby, a Kentucky thoroughbred.

Taylor went to New Orleans first, then St. Louis and other spots to look at prospective candidates, and finally had gone to Kentucky to inspect the bluegrass colt. "He is the horse you need to beat Bales' little mare," said a friend and advisor who had accompanied him, and that had been the deciding factor.

Taylor wrote Bales, challenging him to a race in Austin and the date was set, but enroute the colt sustained an injury which disqualified him and Taylor, unable to make the race as agreed upon, paid a forfeit.

Darby was taken to the Taylor ranch near Hellna, on the San Antonio River and put in training for the postponed event. He soon recovered from the injury and his new owner discovered he had a prodigy to reckon with—not only in speed but also in disposition. Darby was endowed with a rare measure of equine intelligence and a most irascible temper. He would have but one keeper, would allow no stranger to approach his stall and would never tolerate a whip. He was an unusual horse in many ways, particularly in making slow starts, but he usually came through in a whirlwind finish, as Bales had counted on his doing this day.

AND SO gathered at Austin on this day were 5,000 rabid horse-betting fans, intrigued by the nature of the betting—mules, bales of cotton and cash. And they planked down their own cash, most of them on the Kentucky import, but there were a couple of thousand or so others who still had faith in Bales' little mare, because Darby was unknown to them.

The track was in perfect condition and there seemed no excuse for Darby's performance.

Suddenly the groans turned to screams of joy for Darby had started his drive from far behind, coming out of the far turn. He closed so fast that what the fans saw was hard to believe.

The screams became delirious, maddening. Men knocked one another's hats off and beat each over the back as the Kentucky colt closed on the mare, passing her at the 100-yard post. He won by two lengths and the Darby crowd stood in awe, too shocked to express their displeasure at losing.

Twice more during his racing life, Darby ran against Blaze and beat her both times, always coming on in a whirlwind finish after trailing *a la* Silky Sullivan of a more recent era.

He raced horses from New Orleans, from St. Louis, from Kentucky and from just about every part of the country and he never lost a race. He was retired to stud in 1863 and died in 1877 at the ripe old age of twenty-three.

## WHO NAMES TOWNS?

By DON ASHBAUGH

I've always wondered who christened Pullman cars? But then who names anything? Take towns—running down the sources of their names is an intriguing game. Just sit down with the list of postoffices, past and present, in the state of Nevada and wonder at the sources of some which have been "ghosts" for many years, including one dubbed Wonder.

Why in the name of the seven sacred saddle-blankets of Sagittarius did anybody ever dub a place Bar? True, saloons generally were the first business establishments in early mining towns—but why Bar? Yet it had a postoffice from November 16, 1896, to October 31, 1898.

The gent who named Black Forest must have read *Ivanhoe,* but why Black Horse and Black Springs?

And one of my favorites was a town in Lander County dubbed Betty Oneal —that's the way the postal department spelled it.

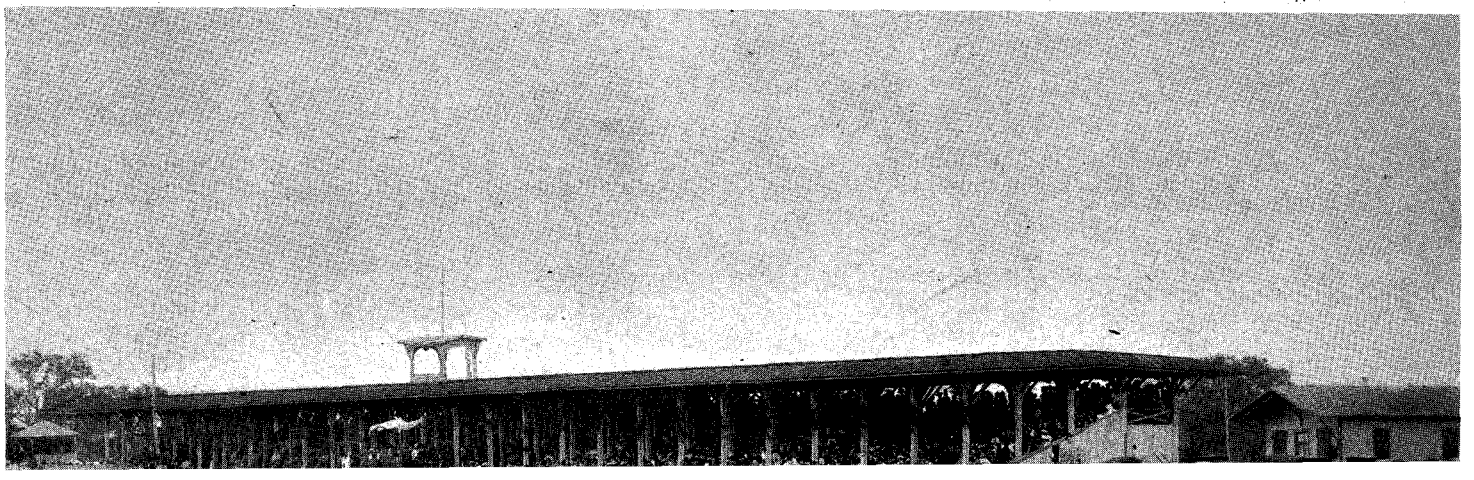
You'll find Broadway, Broken Hills, Bronco, Buffalo Meadows, Buckskin, Bullfrog, Burro and Buttons all on the same page.

And you can't help but wonder how rough life was in Calmville, which had

*(Continued on page 52)*

**The old Austin, Texas, racetrack. Notice the judges' stand on the left.**

Austin Public Library, Austin Collection



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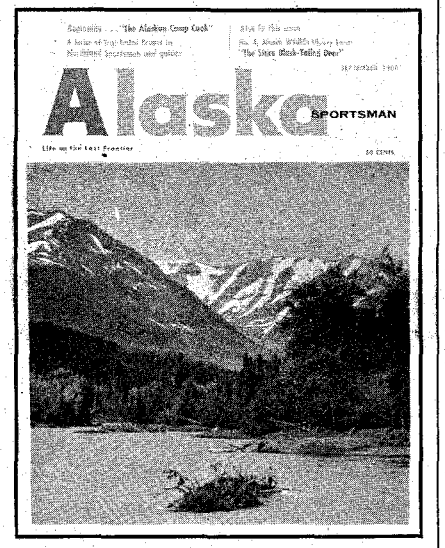


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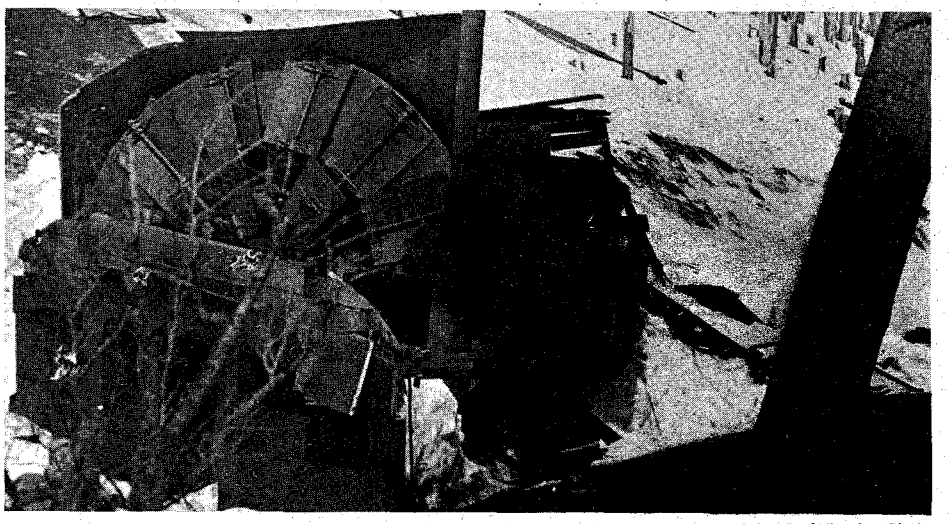

John D. Wheeler Photo

**This is all that remained of a demolished rotary snow plow, and the baggage car on which it tumbled during the avalanche.**

John D. Wheeler Photo

**Wellington, Washington, as it appeared shortly after the disaster of 1910. The trains stood where the long snow shed begins. The new coal chute and motor shed are across the tracks.**

## I Scooped the Wellington Disaster

*(Continued from page 20)*

write that one. It came out on March 4, under the main head: "Ghouls Will Be Shot Down." My story began, "One man had on three woolen undershirts he had stolen, another had a woman's jacket under his coat and a third had some silk he had stolen from a trunk of one of the passengers. They were forced to disgorge and driven from camp at point of gun."

There was no end of story material connected with the great tragedy. There was one passenger, Nellie McGirl, a gifted authoress who had drawn straws with her girl companion in Spokane to see who could travel on to Seattle in search for material for *McClure's Magazine,* but who never reached her goal. Also, Reverend James Thompson, a Presbyterian minister from Bellingham, preached a sermon during the services he arranged aboard the ill-fated local. There was much singing. It is said the services helped those in need, at least for a time. One can well raise the question now how much consolation the Reverend and the people felt when the avalanche swept the train down into the canyon and they met a horrible death amid hissing of steam, splintering of wood and screeching of steel.

Seems to me I covered most of the obvious stories when I was at Wellington . . . right to the finish when I saw the last bodies made ready, wrapped in blankets, strapped to toboggans and sleds and roped down the trail to Scenic.

I stuck to the facts. I picked up my last little human interest piece as I went down the trail to Scenic. It was told by a colored survivor. Here's the way it was printed in the *Times:* "If yo' newspapah gets a wireless asken' fo' info-mation about conditions at Wellin'tun, you-all can tell them for Lucious Anduhson they sho' has been an accident up heah," remarked the porter, as with head bandaged and face scarred and swollen, he limped along the trail from Wellington to Scenic.

"Ah was ripped, to'n, bulged an' broken," said the cheerful native of Alabama. "Ah might have been a whole lot wuss," he added between smiles in which his teeth shone like a string of pearls set in a ripe watermelon. "Foh instance, Ah might have had mah haid completely mashed in by that thar slide. No mo' of the No'thun country for me. No, sir, me fo' the place whar thar's possums and 'simmuns every day fo' supper."

That release wrote "30" to the Wellington disaster as far as I was concerned. Rescue and track clearing operations were completed by March 12, when service was resumed over the Cascade Mountains. For psychological reasons, the name of Wellington was changed to Tye. In 1929, when the old tunnel was abandoned, Tye was literally wiped off the map. You can still see where the town stood if you look across the canyon as you drive west down from Stevens Pass. If you want to, you can drive down a side road into what once was Wellington.

I might mention that because I scooped the opposition, and apparently did a creditable job of daily reporting on that disaster, I was given a T-Mat Gold Medal by the Seattle *Times.* For years I wore it on my vest, and because of it I was able to get a job on a newspaper wherever I went. I still have that medal. It reads: "Wellington, March 3, 1910. J. J. Underwood."



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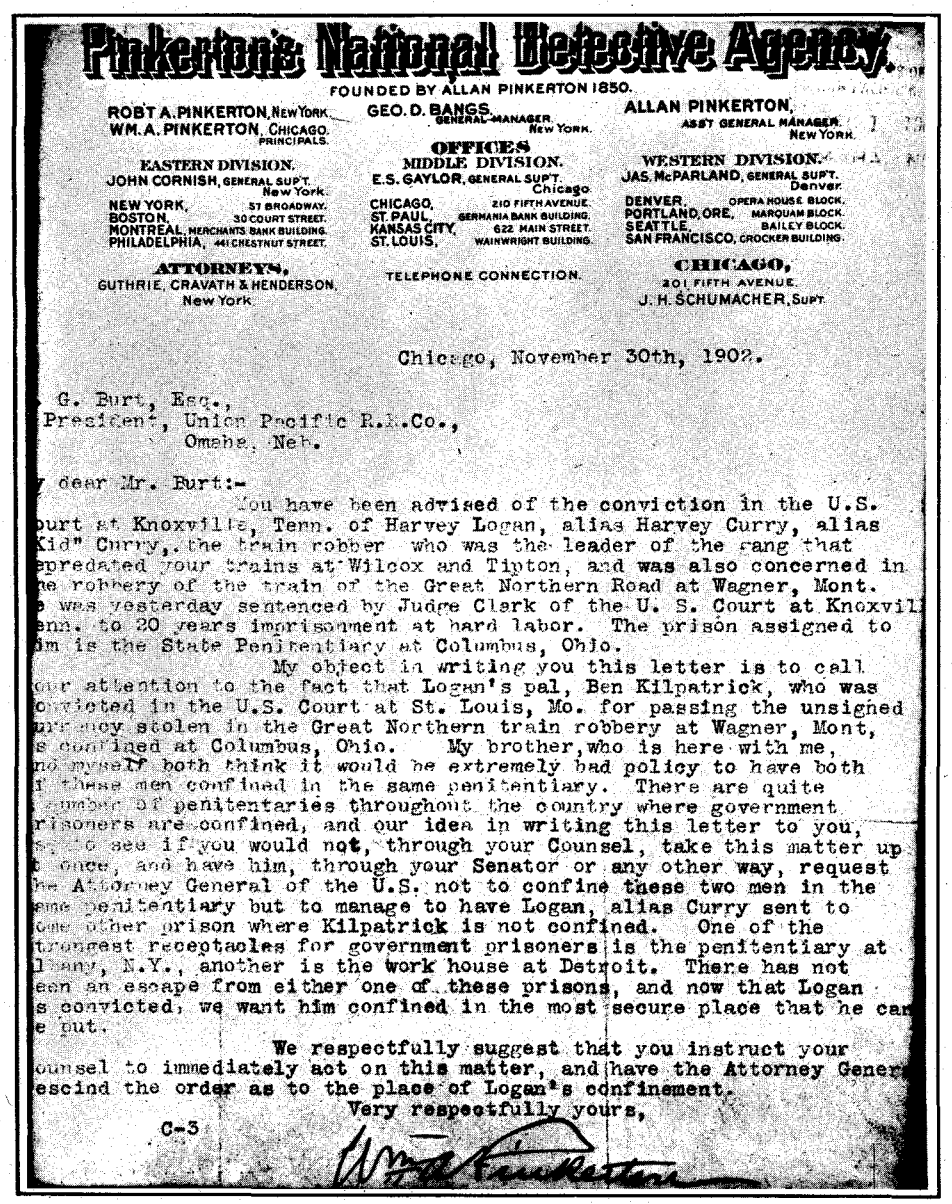
# Ask TRUE WEST

**Editor's Note: Sure! We'll stick our necks out! You ask 'em; we'll answer 'em—any questions of wide and general interest pertaining to the old West (any questions that is, except why we're crazy enough to stick our necks out!) Address your questions to "Ask True West" c/o George D. Wolfe, 509 East Scott Avenue, Knoxville 17, Tennessee. Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope if you wish a direct reply.**

**Pinkerton's worst fears came to pass. Logan broke out of the Knoxville jail under conditions which prompted Davenport to call it "one of the great escapes of the century."**



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Chicago, November 30th, 1902.

G. Burt, Esq.,
President, Union Pacific R.R.Co.,
Omaha, Neb.

dear Mr. Burt:-

You have been advised of the conviction in the U.S. urt at Knoxville, Tenn. of Harvey Logan, alias Harvey Curry, alias Kid" Curry, the train robber who was the leader of the gang that epredated your trains at Wilcox and Tipton, and was also concerned in e robbery of the train of the Great Northern Road at Wagner, Mont. was yesterday sentenced by Judge Clark of the U. S. Court at Knoxvil enn. to 20 years imprisonment at hard labor. The prison assigned to im is the State Penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio.

My object in writing you this letter is to call our attention to the fact that Logan's pal, Ben Kilpatrick, who was onvicted in the U.S. Court at St. Louis, Mo. for passing the unsigned urrency stolen in the Great Northern train robbery at Wagner, Mont, s confined at Columbus, Ohio. My brother, who is here with me, no myself both think it would be extremely bad policy to have both f these men confined in the same penitentiary. There are quite umber of penitentaries throughout the country where government risoners are confined, and our idea in writing this letter to you, s to see if you would not, through your Counsel, take this matter up t once, and have him, through your Senator or any other way, request he Attorney General of the U.S. not to confine these two men in the ame penitentiary but to manage to have Logan, alias Curry sent to ome other prison where Kilpatrick is not confined. One of the trongest receptacles for government prisoners is the penitentiary at lbany, N.Y., another is the work house at Detroit. There has not een an escape from either one of these prisons, and now that Logan s convicted, we want him confined in the most secure place that he can e put.

We respectfully suggest that you instruct your ounsel to immediately act on this matter, and have the Attorney Gener escind the order as to the place of Logan's confinement.

Very respectfully yours,

C-3

*Question:* In a book I read on Chris Madsen, it is stated that the Clantons were unarmed at the O. K. Corral. Homer Croy wrote the book. I would like your comment.—Mark Caruthers, Peru, Indiana.
*Answer:* Ike Clanton only was unarmed. Billy Claiborne carried two guns slung from his belt in holsters. Billy Clanton and Frank McLowery each had a gun slung from their belts. Ike Clanton had a Colt at first, but discarded it before firing commenced. Tom McLowery had a gun stuck in the waistband of his trousers.

*Question:* I've heard it said that Harvey Logan boasted that no jail would hold him, and after his conviction at Knoxville predicted he would get out like he did at Belle Fouche. Is it so?—Tate Wells, Salt Lake City, Utah.
*Answer:* Logan was always dangerous and adept at escape. We don't know if he made the boast. He probably did not as he was extremely shrewd, and to do so would forewarn his keepers. William Pinkerton knew the man and, as this letter shows, he tried to alert authorities that Logan and Kilpatrick together made a very dangerous team. As a matter of fact, Logan escaped the Knoxville jail before he was taken to Columbus.

*Question:* Who was the wounded trooper left by Captain Weir to the tender mercies of the Sioux at the Little Big Horn fight?—C. Selwun, APO No. 35, New York, New York.
*Answer:* So far as we know, this unfortunate man's identity has not been given. It was of a nature not to the army's credit and the officials had no comment about it. But the official records list three men as killed in Weir's Troop D, namely: Vincent Charlie, Patrick Golden, and Edward Hansen. It was one of the three. Perhaps the Custodian of Custer Battlefield National Park could settle the matter by checking the grave registrations. If one should be missing then it is likely the man.

*Question:* Where was the JJ Ranch and who was the owner?—Al Streiter, San Diego, California.
*Answer:* The JJ was a four-wagon outfit with a spread of 100,000 cattle in a domain that extended from Trinidad, Colorado, to the Kansas border. The headquarters was about eighteen miles north of La Junta. The ranch was largely owned by English and Scotch capitalists.

*Question:* How many people were killed by Quantrill and his raiders at Lawrence, Kansas?—Chester Margraves, Duluth, Minnesota.
*Answer:* No one knows for sure. Around 150 bodies were found. However a great

*(Continued on page 45)*



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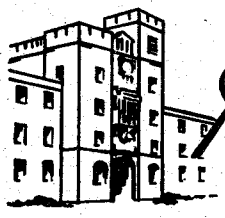

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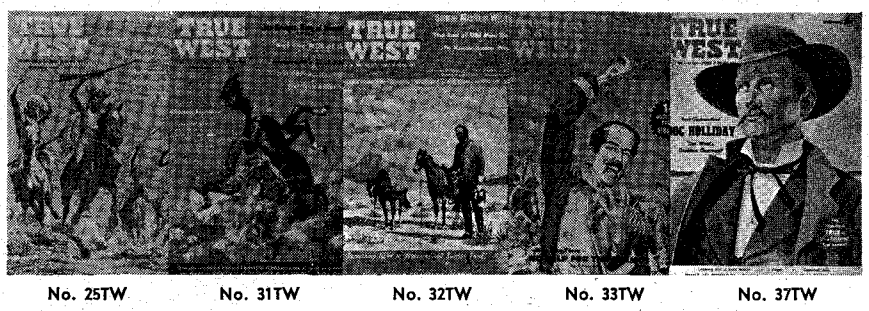


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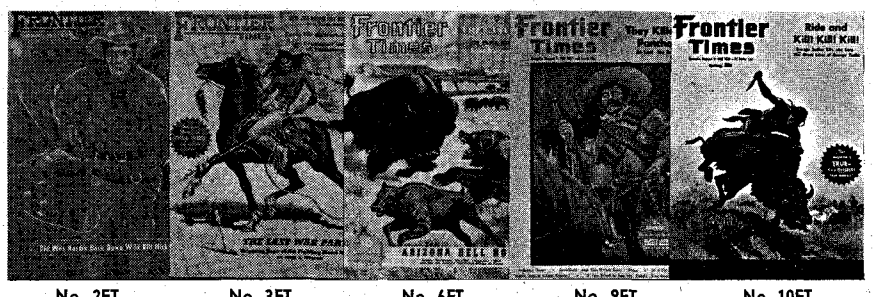


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## Buffalo Hunt

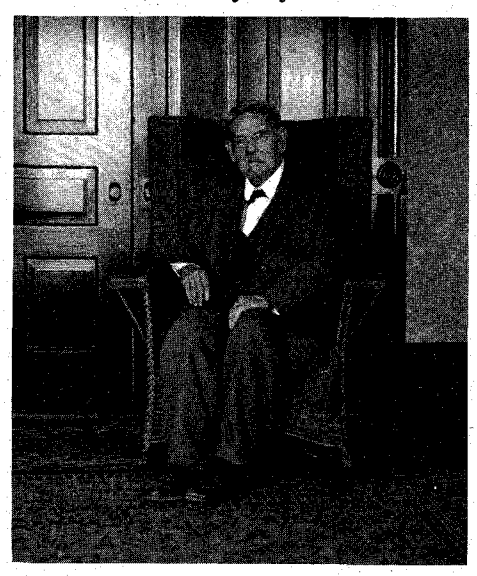
*(Continued from page 9)*

this 'darkroom.' He constructed another box in which to carry his cameras, tripods, and other needed equipment. I furnished everything in the way of cameras and supplies, and paid the expenses involved. The 'Life on the Frontier' series had about 100 pictures, including the buffalo pictures here."

The party of buffalo hunters set out from Austin in January, 1874, and headed for the northwest. They were joined on the way by two buffalo hunters who were in a horse-drawn wagon, so that there were four wagons all told. They followed in a general way the route of the mining expedition, and went about 120 miles beyond Fort Griffin into the Indian and buffalo country. At that time Fort Griffin was a wild town. General McKenzie was stationed there with his troops and Tonkawa Indian scouts. Mr. Oberwetter recalls that the Tonkawas carried towsacks tied to their saddles which they declared were for Comanche scalps. This was considered a good joke, for the Comanches were the fiercest and strongest of the Plains Indians, and the Tonkawas were afraid of them. The following description of Fort Griffin was printed in a Texas paper in 1877, but doubtless applies as well in 1874.

"The town of Griffin is composed of all the elements of man and woman kind. Sharp's rifle and Colt's six-shooter are the supreme law of the land. Among the roughs, thieves, and outlaws there is a class of good men here that are endeavoring to check the lawlessness, and at their own expense have employed a marshal to assist the regular officers in keeping order. The business portion of the town is in the valley. The Post is up on the hill, which is a beautiful location. There are ninety-six Negro troops of the Tenth Cavalry stationed here . . . . There are in the place three drygoods stores, one confectionery, one drug and hardware house, one hotel, one restaurant, one wagon and blacksmith shop, ten saloons, and one music hall. This is headquarters for the buffalo hunters. There have been 75,000 hides shipped from this place, and there are about 30,000 yet to be shipped."

The whole country beyond Griffin was



W. J. Oliphant



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full of such game as turkey, deer, antelope, and of course, buffalo. At Buffalo Gap—a low pass in the hills through which the buffalo came into the southern range—the ground was as bare as a floor. This gap was like the neck of an hourglass through which the herds poured back and forth with the changing seasons.

"We struck camp," said Mr. Oberwetter, "and remained for two months, moving but one time. All these pictures were made around those two camps. The weather was cold, as you can see by the snow in one of the pictures, and the cold, especially a norther, would bring the buffalo through by the thousands. Outside the buffalo runs the grass was fine, and our oxen and horses got very fat. We kept them hobbled or side-lined and drove them to water once a day.

"The country was marked by many buffalo signs. The great herds usually spread out over a wide area, like other cattle, traveling in open formation and always with the bulls on the outside of the herd. Individuals or small groups followed the trails, one behind the other, and these trails could be depended on to give the best route to a waterhole. Each season the trails were worn deeper, both by wind and water, and I have seen them so deep that the animal's side would rub the embankments. When they got too deep the buffalo would shift to better ground.

"Our method of hunting was about as follows: one or two men would go out on horseback and locate the buffalo. Then the men would take a stand, separated from each other by double gun range and on the windward side of the herd, because the buffalo had a keen sense of smell. We could kill them at 150 yards with our Sharps, and much farther with the 'Big Fifties.' We aimed to hit the buffalo just behind the shoulder so that the bullet would pass through the lungs and the bottom of the heart. When fatally wounded in this way, the buffalo would stop, switch his tail and walk off by himself. If he lowered his head and began to cough up blood we knew it was useless to bother with him any more. He would go down on one forefoot, then on the other, then would drop on his hind feet and roll over on his side to die. The other animals would ordinarily pay little attention to the wounded buffalo. Every hunter would try to get what was called a 'stand.' This meant that the animals became confused and gathered around the dead buffalo rather than running away. With a stand it was often possible to kill an entire herd, or shoot until the gun barrel got too hot to shoot any more. In those days I have heard the guns booming like an artillery battle.

"When the killing was over, the skinning would begin. The wagons would go with the skinners and gather the hides and the meat. There was an art in skinning a buffalo.

"First, you cut the hide around the neck, rip up the belly, and down each leg to the hoofs. Then pull the hide from the neck until a rope could be tied on it. Then the animal was snubbed to a tree or peg, the rope hitched to the wagon and the hide stripped off by driving up the team. Men stood ready with knives to keep the flesh cut away from the hide in case it began to tear. The cow hides were more valuable in the market than the bull hides, and as a result we killed as many cows as possible.

"The cuts of meat were taken along


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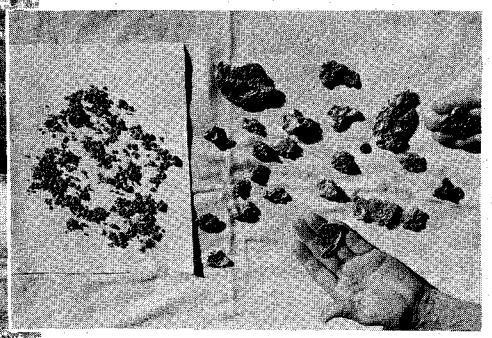

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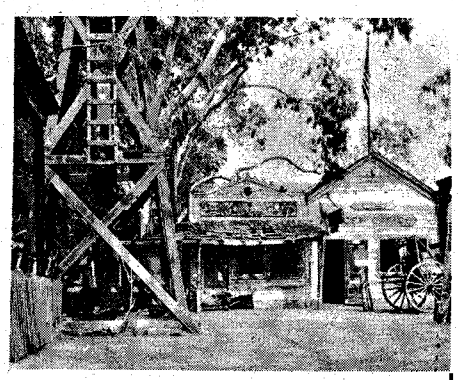

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with the hides. From the cows we took the hump, tongue, backstrip—a strip along the backbone—the tenderloin, and the hindquarters. From the bulls we often took nothing but the tongue. I remember one of the boys went out once and came back with thirty or forty tongues.

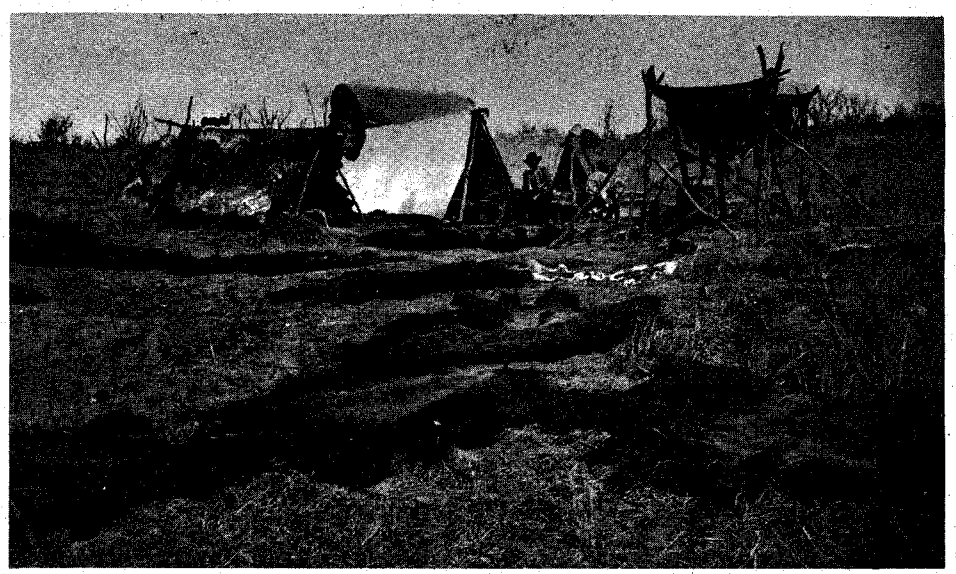
"When the wagons were loaded with hides and meat, we headed for camp. We dug a long deep trench, and lined it with hides. In this we salted down the meat, using large quantities of salt. The meat remained in the salt pit for five or six days to draw out the blood. Then we took it up and put it on the scaffolds built of mesquite or willow poles, that you see in the picture.

"The next thing was to build a slow smoke fire under the scaffold. This fire had to be kept up day and night for two weeks. We made it of green mesquite, or willow with enough brush and dried wood or buffalo chips to keep it going. In time a crust would form on the outside of the chunks of meat, and the longer the meat smoked the thicker the crust would get. The right method was to stop as soon as a good crust formed, leaving the meat inside fresh and sweet. After being treated in this fashion, the meat could be handled like stove wood.

"The green hide of a buffalo might weigh anywhere from seventy-five to 150 pounds. The bull hides—especially the old ones—were likely to be thick and scabby, and of less value than the cow hides which were darker, glossier and easier to handle. They made beautiful robes, then becoming popular as winter lap robes for buggies and carriages and northern sleighs. The hides were brought into camp and pegged down to dry as shown in the picture. When the sun hit them they would contract, pull the stakes, and curl up. Then it was a job for two or three men to get them down again. When dry, they were tied together and were ready for market.

"We not only took buffalo hides, but many others. If you look closely at one picture you may see a deer hanging in the tree. We had deer, skunk, and badger hides, not to mention wolves. We got the wolves by poisoning. Before leaving the settlements we bought all the strychnine in the city, and I think we had enough to kill every wolf in Texas. We took the forequarters of a buffalo and drug it by the saddlehorn around a circle of two or three miles. Then we took small scraps of meat, put strychnine in some of it and scattered it along the trail we had made, putting some of the meat under buffalo chips. When we went out to 'run' the trail, we did not find a single dead wolf, though the bait was gone. But when we went to the waterhole, there we found several dead. In this way we learned that poisoned wolves went to water. After that we put the poison near the waterholes. We got, in all, fifty to sixty wolf hides.

"Finally, we had all the meat and hides we could haul, and made ready for the long trip back to the settlements. We packed the dried meat in the wagon beds and put the hides on top, letting the tails hang on the outside. We headed for Waco, a distance of 300 miles. When we crossed the hundredth meridian, we left the buffalo country and Indian country and came into the settlements. To many of these people, a buffalo hide was a curiosity, and the women and children would come out and beg for buffalo tails as souvenirs to send to their people farther East.



**Hides drying in the buffalo hunters' camp.**

"By this time our clothes were worn out. I had no shoes at all, and had made some by sewing up the skin of buffalo legs, with the hair inside. They were so shapeless that one could not tell by my tracks which way I was traveling. When we got to Waco, we sold everything, hides, meat, and all to a merchant named Hays—J. D. Hays, I think. We got about $1,300, or a little over $100 each after expenses were paid. I bought some shoes and clothes and went on to Austin where I later joined the Texas Rangers. As I recall, we sold the buffalo hides for $1.55 each, the meat at 13c a pound, and the tongues at $9.00 a dozen. These brought the best money because they were sold to Eastern hotels at fancy prices."

The following extract from the *Galveston News* of June 6, 1876, gives an idea of the traffic in buffalo hides:

"The extent of the traffic in buffalo hides and the skins of other wild beasts in northern Texas, may be inferred from the following extract from a letter of a special correspondent of the *News:*

'On the road from Dallas to Weatherford the traveler is constantly meeting wagons loaded with buf-



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falo meat and hides, and bear and wolf skins, bound for Dallas for sale and shipment east. Citizens on the road report that as many as 100 wagons have passed their houses in one day. These wagons on an average carry ninety to 100 hides.' "

## Indian Guns against Custer

*(Continued from page 21)*

shot breech-loading rifles. But there was not much ammunition for the good guns. The muzzle-loaders usually were preferred, because for these we could mold the bullets and put in whatever powder was desired according to the quantity on hand. I believe the Sioux had, in proportion to their numbers, about the same supply of firearms that we had. The Waist and Skirt people (a tribal division of the Cheyennes) had few or no guns, and were in every way very poor. My muzzle-loading rifle had been lost with my other personal effects when we had been driven out and our lodges burned on Powder River (here Wooden Leg referred to Colonel Reynolds' attack on a Cheyenne village on March 17, 1876).

"My cap-and-ball six-shooter was my warring weapon. I had plenty of caps, powder and lead for it. I had a bullet mold to make its bullets from the lead. I kept the bullets and caps in two small tin boxes. The powder I carried in a horn swung by a thong."

I was particularly interested in verifying Charging Bear's blunt accusation that Major Reno had attempted to "get out from under" at the Military Court of Inquiry by stating that the Indians were armed exclusively with Winchesters, weapons far superior to the soldiers' single-shot .45-70 Springfield carbines. I found that the major and his officers stressed the use of Winchesters by the Indians. Reno himself stated:

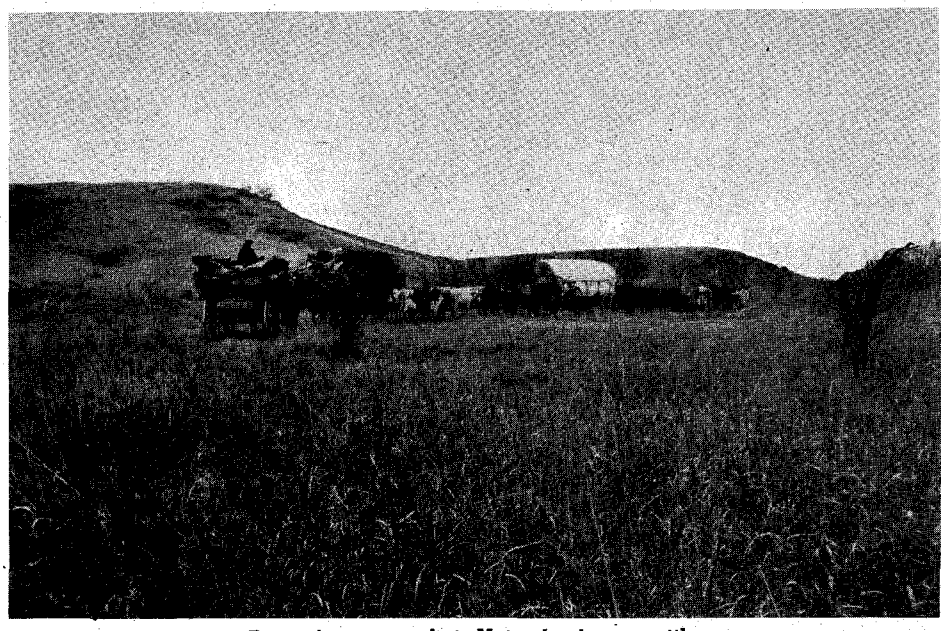
"The Indians had Winchester rifles and the column made a large target for them and they were pumping their bullets into it."

*Question:* "The Indians, so far as you observed, were armed with Winchester rifles?"

*Answer:* "Yes, sir."

*Question:* "Do you know that they had any other arms?"

*Answer:* "No, sir."



Returning to market. Note the loose cattle.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*Navajo Trail Magazine*

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Major Reno's statements were backed up by Lieutenants Varnum and De Rudio, at least in part. Both officers were questioned as to the Winchesters' range, after Varnum had mentioned them in his testimony. Sergeant Windolph, in the book *I Fought With Custer: The Story of Sergeant Windolph,* by Frazer and Robert Hunt, had this to say on the subject:

"It has been generally accepted that all the red warriors were armed with the latest model repeating Winchester rifles, and that they had a plentiful supply of ammunition. For my part, I believe that fully half the warriors carried only bows, arrows and lances, and that possibly half the remainder carried odds and ends of old muzzle-loaders and single-shot rifles of various vintages. Probably not more than twenty-five or thirty percent of the warriors carried modern repeating rifles."

Although Windolph's estimate was far more conservative and reasonable than Reno's, twenty-five to thirty percent of the Sioux fighting force would total over 500 warriors armed with Winchesters. The evidence is all against this. Crazy Horse and his band played a leading part in the annihilation of Custer and his men; yet when the famed Oglala war chief surrendered at Camp Robinson in May of 1877, only 117 firearms were turned in by nearly 300 warriors. These were nearly all muzzle-loaders, old cap-and-ball revolvers and single-shot rifles and carbines. Only half-a-dozen Winchesters were surrendered including that of the chief. All were Model 1866 .44 caliber rimfire.

No detailed record of the weapons turned over to the military by Sitting Bull and his band was made. The notorious medicine man and "old man chief" of the Hunkpapa Sioux and 187 followers surrendered July 21, 1881, at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. The newspapers of the times had Sitting Bull making a ringing speech as he handed his rifle to Major Brotherton, commanding officer at Fort Buford: "Let it be recorded that I am the last man of my people to lay down my gun!" Actually, the tired old leader said nothing at all when he delivered his weapon. This tack-studded Winchester carbine Model 1866, caliber .44 rimfire, serial number 124,375, is now in the Major Brotherton Collection at the Smithsonian Institution.

It seems pretty well established that all the Winchesters used by the Indians in the battle numbered not more than forty or fifty at most, probably less. All were Model 1866. The famous Winchester '73, all-steel .44-40 centerfire rifle was certainly in limited Plains use at the time, but, significantly, no centerfire cartridge cases were found on the field. None turned up later, for no centerfire cartridge cases are contained in the collection of souvenirs on display at the battlefield. Colored pictographs of the battle drawn by Indian participants show lever action rifles with bronze frames in the hands of some of the warriors. Clearly, these weapons were 1860 Henry and 1866 Winchesters. Cartridge cases for both the 1860 Henry and 1866 Winchester were found in considerable numbers on the field.

In the face of such evidence as this, the assertion by some writers that "between 400 and 550 Sioux were armed with Winchester '73s is patently absurd. But of such fanciful stuff is the "Western historical article" woven.—*Reprinted from Guns & Ammo,* May-June, 1959.



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## Three Rocks, Two Graves—and a Fortune in Gold!

*(Continued from page 15)*

Mayor Robidoux, who assured Cortez that there were no Mexican bandits in the territory at the time.

The mule train left at daybreak. There was nothing about this departure to make it different from any other. Everything seemed to be routine.

Shortly after sunup, Cortez looked back over his shoulder and saw something that gave him a start. "I believe we're being followed," he told De Grazi.

"By how many?" De Grazi wanted to know.

"I can't be sure. I saw at least three horsemen, maybe more."

"I wonder how word of the gold shipment got around," De Grazi said as he turned to look back. "We were very careful."

"Someone must have helped Madam Barcelo pack the coins in the buckskin pouches. How many horsemen can you see?"

"Eight so far."

"Then if it must come, why go deeper into the desert? Let it come here."

They halted, herded the mules together and waited, watching the rising dust cloud in the distance. Finally, it veered off, disappeared.

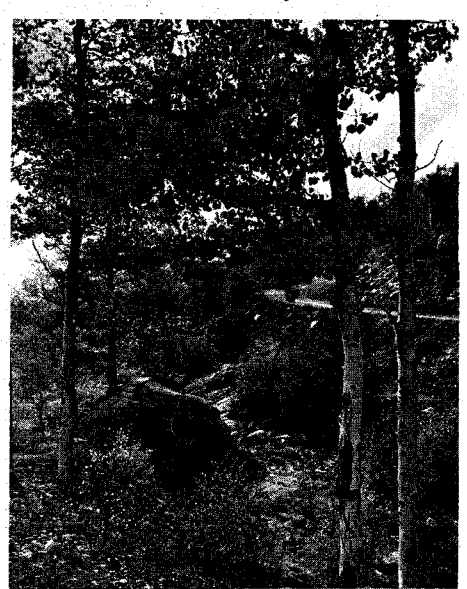
"If they are set on robbing us," Cortez said, "there are five of us to their eight. We have the advantage of being the defenders. We'll go on and keep a sharp lookout for them. They may turn back when they see we are ready for them."

The mule caravan went on. They did not see another dust cloud until almost sundown.

"They're still back there," Cortez told his partner, "waiting until we're in less open country. I look for them to attack around noon tomorrow. I think they are all Mexicans. I saw some sombreros this morning when we counted them."

In camp that night Cortez, who was standing guard at the time, heard a party of horsemen pass the camp to the north. The moon was up and the horses and their shadows created a long, dark formation moving swiftly over the plain.

"They're heading for an ambush," Cortez told De Grazi. "They don't want to



New Mexico State Tourist Bureau Photo

**The road in the background winds upward through mountains like those Cortez and De Grazi crossed with their pack trains.**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attack us in the open. I saw some dangerous looking characters looking us over in the square this morning."

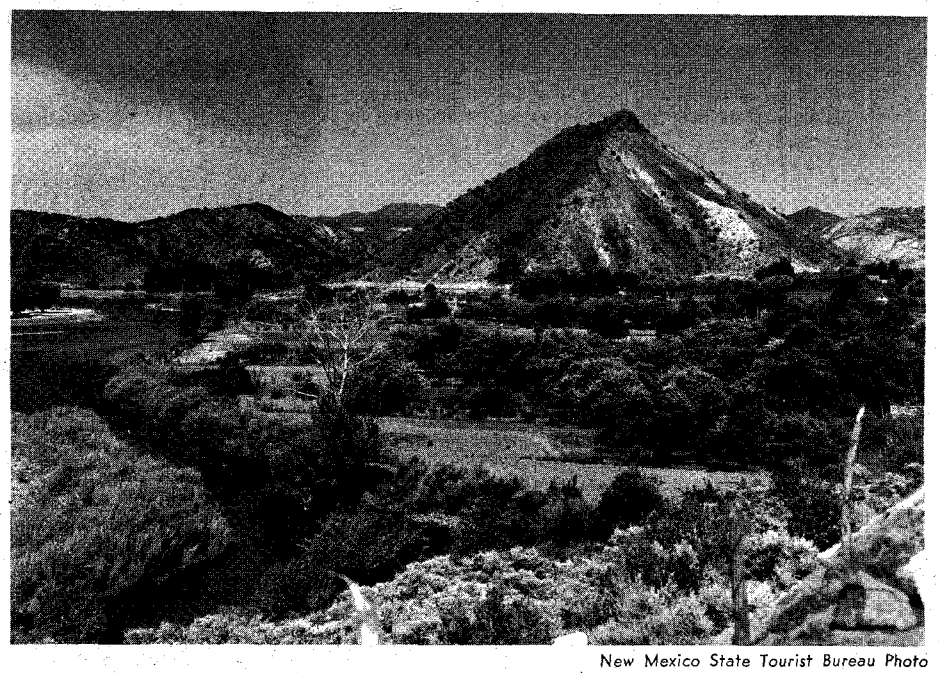
At daybreak the mule train was under way again. The drivers kept the animals bunched as much as possible.

The surprise attack came at noon near three rocks. The biggest one was described by Cortez later as half as big as a house. They drove the mules to the rocks and tied them to a single picket rope, hurriedly finding places of shelter.

The rocks offered such a fine defense that Cortez and De Grazi, along with the packers, remained alive until darkness came. Then it became almost impossible to see any moving thing more than a few feet away. There were twelve rifles on the train and all were reloaded as fast as they were fired.

Frightened by the firing, one of the mules broke away from the picket line. When one of the Mexican packers took a few steps away from the rocks to try to recapture it, he was knifed to death.

The moon came up around nine. This gave the defenders an advantage which they maintained the rest of the night.



New Mexico State Tourist Bureau Photo

**"Three rocks, two graves—and a fortune in gold!" Somewhere in country similar to this, Madame Barcelo's lost fortune is buried.**

But during the darkest hours the attackers had shifted their position, taking advantage of cover nearer the rocks. When dawn broke, the defenders found themselves exposed. De Grazi was picked off by a sniper and died instantly with a bullet through the heart.

Sizing up the situation, Cortez saw that his position was hopeless. Sooner or later all would be killed.

Throughout the day Cortez and the two Mexicans managed to stay alive. The mules, made uneasy by lack of water, finally broke the picket line and escaped into the desert. They had been unpacked during the night, however, and the gold was still intact. Cortez and his men dared not leave cover to try to round up the animals.

Cortez kept watch while the Mexican packers dug a grave for the two dead men.

"Dig a trench separately," he ordered. When the work was finished, De Grazi and the knifed Mexican were placed in the grave and covered over. The gold was then brought and buried in the trench, after which a fire was built over it so that its ashes would hide it. Not finding the gold, Cortez figured the bandits would open the grave, but would they find the trench? The leftover muck from it had been thrown on the grave, so there was only one mound. Even if they did scrape away the ashes, it was possible they would not detect that a trench had been dug. At least it was worth a try.

Cortez sent one of his packers to the top of the largest rock with a white flag in his hand and instructed him to say his employer would surrender if guaranteed his life. The packer was shot dead.

"Well, if that's the way they want it, let's kill as many of them as we can before they kill us," Cortez told his one remaining ally.

All during the late afternoon the rifle duel went on, snipers shooting at snipers, but no one was hit.

Just before dark the bandit leader offered a truce. If Cortez would hold his fire, he would come in and talk things over. To this Cortez agreed.

The leader, a greasy-looking man wearing a huge sombrero, said that if Cortez and his helper would surrender and lay down their rifles, their lives would be spared.

"But what will happen to us afterward?" Cortez wanted to know. "Will we be permitted to return to Santa Fe?"

"Tell us where the gold is and then we will decide that matter about your freedom."

"Gold?" Cortez said. "What gold?"

"The gold you are taking east for Madam Barcelo."

"Oh, but that won't be until next trip. Madam Barcelo decided not to ship it until the weather gets better. She was fearful of the storms."

"You lie!" the bandit leader snarled and summoned his men for a search.

WHILE THE Mexicans were busy searching the camp, Cortez rekindled the fire and put some coffee on to boil. With a fire burning over the spot, the Mexicans might be misled and fail to find it.

Suddenly the remaining packer broke away and raced into the desert in an attempt to escape. He was ridden down quickly and shot to death.

The bandit leader demanded to know why the packer had attempted such a foolish break.

Cortez had his wits about him. "He knew you would find no gold and you had threatened his life unless the gold was found." He shrugged his shoulders. "One way to die is as good as another, is it not?"

This more than anything else convinced the ambusher that there was no gold in camp. He accepted the discouraging explanation Cortez had given him about Madam Barcelo's deciding not to send her gold east until later in the year.

The Mexican band rode southward, taking Cortez with them. Cortez himself was a Spaniard and claimed no kinship to Mexicans. They apparently were afraid to kill him because he said he was a brother of Father Cortez of Santa Fe, a Catholic priest. Cortez had told the leader that if he were slain, his brother would call down the wrath of God upon the Mexicans.

As the trail into Mexico lengthened, it became more and more apparent that the Mexicans wished Cortez to escape. They appeared to be giving him every opportunity to do so, perhaps hoping the rigors of the desert would be too difficult and that he would die of starvation and thirst. One man alone in the great open expanse of rattlesnake-infested desolation might not make it.

One night as his captors slept, Cortez discovered an old horse tethered close to his bed. Tied to its dilapidated saddle were some scant provisions. It was an open invitation to flee and he decided to accept it. The Mexicans wanted to be rid of him before he died on their hands.

Cortez slipped away into a starlit night and rode west along the Rio Grande, intending to follow it north to Santa Fe. But the poor food the Mexicans had given him so weakened his system that further travel made him ill. He could remain in the hard old saddle for no more than an hour or two at a time.

Somehow, after two months, during which his horse strayed away and he lived on horned toads, lizards and an occasional rattlesnake, he managed to stagger into the outskirts of Santa Fe and was picked up by a horseman who happened to see him trying to drink from a muddy spring.

After leaving his Mexican captors he had not seen another human being. How he managed to survive was not told in full, for his last two days on earth were devoted to telling Mayor Robidoux of the ambush in the desert and where the gold had been buried. He drew a crude map of the three rocks and said the money would be found in the trench next to the grave containing the two bodies. He estimated that they had been forty miles due east of Taos when the attack came. Every time he was asked how he had managed to survive his ordeal in the desert he would say, "That is not important. The important thing is to see that Madam Barcelo gets her gold back. Now remember, there are three rocks . . ."

On the second day he weakened to the point where he could no longer discuss it and toward evening he died.

Mayor Robidoux and Madam Barcelo sent six men into the desert with the map to recover the gold. One of them was



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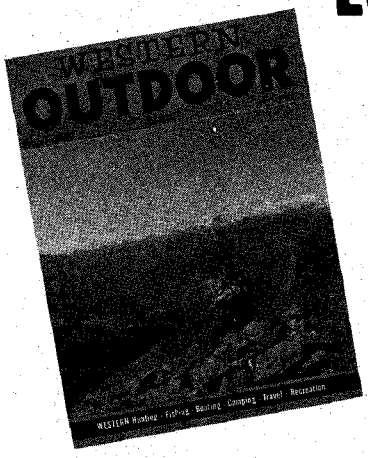


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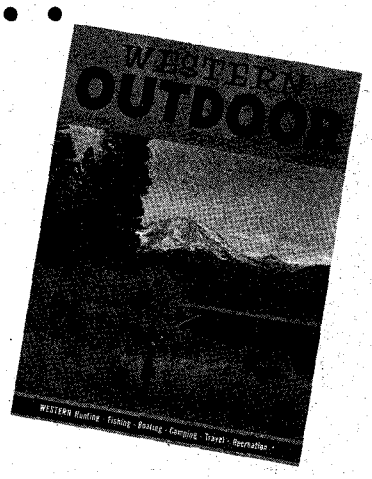


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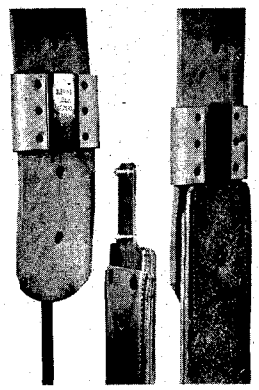

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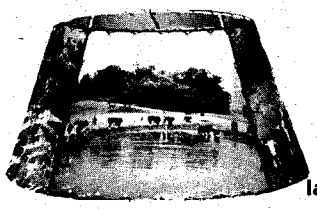

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Madam Barcelo's gambling-hall manager, Francis Pomeroy. No copies were made of the map; Madam Barcelo was afraid that if copies were made they might fall into unfriendly hands.

The six men were gone four days before anyone worried about them. When they did not return at the end of a week another party rode out looking for them.

They were found massacred. The men had been stripped naked and scalped, but this could have been the work of Mexican bandits who wished to leave the impression the attack had been made by Indians. Their personal effects were so scattered that the map Cortez had drawn was never found.

Not very many Indian tribes were hostile as early as 1839 and scalping had not become a general practice, so it is likely that the real culprits were Mexican bandits.

The spot where the bodies were found was miles away from any rocks. Tracks indicated that the attacking party had come up out of the south, made its attack and gone back the same way it came. It had not been stalking the six men so it seemed unlikely that the gold had been the cause of the attack. It was more likely that the six had been set upon for whatever valuables they might have on them, such as watches and money. All of the saddles except one had been taken and old ones left in their places. The stolen saddles were new and expensive. Indians, it must be pointed out, spurned saddles at that time, preferring to ride bareback. It was not until much later that the Plains Indians took to saddles.

AND SO the map to the lost gold itself was lost but for many years thereafter there were searches, none of them well organized.

The story was told many years later by John S. Forsythe, a New Orleans newspaper man who got it from Mayor Robidoux and Madam Barcelo.

In Taos in 1871 a man named Tom Backus, then fifty-seven years of age, claimed he and two others had dug up the gold, but the fact that Backus lived from hand to mouth and died some years later without a cent in his pocket, made it seem very unlikely that his tale had any basis of truth.

That the gold is still where Cortez buried it is probable. A pair of searchers flying a pattern over the area in a helicopter and watching from above for rocks half the size of a small house might do well for themselves. They could spot all likely-looking rocks and then drive to them one by one in a jeep, with a metal detector along to find the gold. Wherever possible the 'copter could sit down alongside a rock for a test and then fly on, thereby eliminating that rock from the picture.

If you have a helicopter and a metal detector, it might be worth a try. *Quién sabe?*

New Mexico State Tourist Bureau Photo

**The Rio Grande River, nearing flood stage. Cortez wandered for days in the region it traverses, searching for his way back to Taos.**

## Silver Mountain

*(Continued from page 27)*

the place where the massacre had taken place was called Cibecue Creek. This, remember, contradicted his original story.

Recently the White Mountain Apaches advertised that they would lease blocks of ground on the reservation for prospecting and mining, but the price for a lease is so high only a very large corporation can possibly afford it. They had one bid in the area of Cibecue Creek, where a large deposit of iron is known to exist, but the prohibitive price has discouraged individual prospectors from going into the area to look for the silver mountain.

On the other hand, the San Carlos Reservation has been open to prospecting on and off through the years. It is possible for a small miner or prospector to still get a permit, but this reservation, too, is going to take a leaf out of the Navajo book and go in for big corporations.

I did a lot of prospecting on the San Carlos Reservation, north of the Gila, with the husband of an Apache. We received verbal permission from the Apache council to prospect. I found mineral, but could not get a permit to mine it. I also found the largest lead outcrop I have ever seen. There was no silver in it, or almost none, however. I also found old diggings and old bones. The Apaches didn't leave survivors.

The silver mountain is there. However, the problem is not just finding it, but getting permission to mine it. Perhaps some day it will be possible.



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## Ask True West

*(Continued from page 35)*

many more are believed to have been consumed in the fires set by the raiders. Quantrill was killed in Kentucky near the close of the war.

*Question:* Who owns the bill of sale that Billy the Kid wrote out when he sold his horse when he was in jail?—I. Chavez, San Louis Obispo, California.
*Answer:* We understand that it is owned by the Panhandle Plains Historical Society, Canyon, Texas, and that the animal was a bay mare.

*Question:* What ever became of Billy the Kid's dog?—F. J. Burkett, Raton, New Mexico.
*Answer:* Boy! This question has us stopped—almost. For a time we doubted that the Kid had a dog. But he did, and we understand from an item in the Las Vegas *Gazette,* Oct. 7, 1882, that the dog was acquired by C. B. Smith of the Internal Revenue Service and that he shipped the celebrated dog to Illinois in that year.

30th. Vic Annannia left Old Woman minutes later in the teeth of a ferocious blizzard. He and his team staggered into Unlakleet, on the rim of the Bering Sea, at 3:30 a.m. Saturday. Myles Gonangman pressed on to Shaktolik where Henry Ivanoff took over. A short distance out, Ivanoff turned the package over to Leonhard Seppala, crack driver of the North. Seppala had mushed 169 miles from Nome to reach the relay. He turned about and made forty-two miles to Isaacs Point where he rested his dogs. He had made eighty-four miles that day, having twice traversed a part of treacherous Norton Sound. Seventy-eight miles out of Nome, Charlie Olson took over from Seppala and drove to Bluff, twenty-five miles farther on. (Olson was badly frozen.) At Bluff, Gunnar Kaasen was waiting with a fresh team of malemutes. Kaasen ate away thirty-two grueling miles to Safety, where Ed Rohn was to meet him for the last lap into Nome, twenty-one miles away. But in the raging storm Kaasen missed Rohn. He struggled on to Nome and reached there at 5:30 a.m. February 2. (The serum had frozen!)

Leonhard Seppala and his dogs.

*Question:* Who were the dog-team drivers that carried the antitoxin to Nome in 1925 and what was the distance? What time elapsed?—F. Ellwood, Ogden, Utah.
*Answer:* There were around a score of drivers who covered the 658 miles in five and one-half days under truly appalling conditions. The drivers were: William Shannon, leadoff man, who covered the fifty-two miles from Nenana to Tolovana in twelve hours; Edgar Kalland relayed thirty-one miles from Tolovana to Hot Springs; Dan Green twenty-eight miles from Hot Springs to Fish Lake (at sixty below zero!); Johnny Folger traversed the twenty-six miles to Tanana in two hours and forty minutes. At the turn on the Yukon where the trail hit the mountains, Nicolai, Corning, Joseph, Pitka, McCarthy, Nollver, Patsy, and Evans struggled through by stages to Koltag. At this point the serum was placed in the capable hands of Jackscrew, a native Eskimo, who lit a shuck for Old Woman, a shelter cabin forty miles away. He reached it at 9:15 p.m., Friday, January

*Question:* What became of Major Marcus A. Reno, 7th Cavalry, after the Chicago inquiry in '79?—Randil Corbett, Cheyenne, Wyoming.
*Answer:* Major Reno was in command at Fort Meade for a short time. On April 1, 1880, he was dismissed from the army for "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." He died March 30, 1889, in a Washington, D. C., hospital.

*Question:* Why did most of the early settlers of the West use oxen instead of horses and mules to haul the covered wagons?—Fay Thatcher, Pulaski, Tennessee.
*Answer:* Oxen were tougher, cheaper, more docile, close grazers, and even yelling Comanches couldn't make them stampede. And perhaps more important, their flesh was more palatable.

*Question:* Who first introduced barbed wire in Texas?—Carl Hutton, Memphis, Tennessee.


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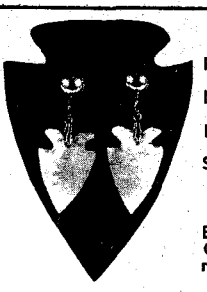

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*Answer:* John W. "Bet-A-Million" Gates is said to have staged a rodeo in the Military Plaza at San Antonio in the '70s "with the wildest cattle in Texas" in which he demonstrated to the crowd the effectiveness of barbed wire in controlling stock.

*Question:* Would appreciate any data you can furnish regarding Rose Dunn, known about Stillwater, Oklahoma as "Rose of Cimarron."—H. Cook, USN, San Francisco 14, California.
*Answer:* For you lucky people who still have a copy, the September, 1954, issue of TRUE WEST carried a very detailed article by Glenn Shirley. Unfortunately this issue is no longer available.

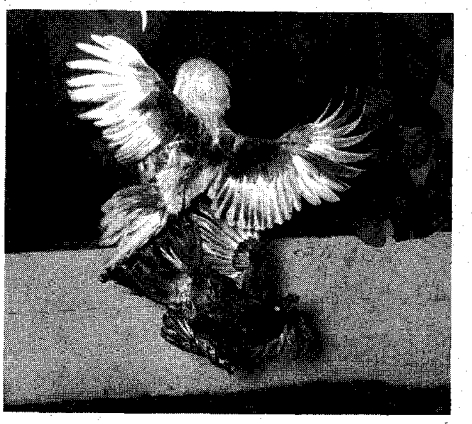
*Question:* How long was Jesse James active?—Boyd Segrist, East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
*Answer:* Jesse was "active" from St. Valentine's Day in 1866 until his demise in 1882, a period of about fifteen years. He was "active" for a year or more as a guerilla during the Civil War. Call it sixteen years. Very few stay in the game that long.

Union Pacific Railroad Photo

**The last picture ever taken of Jesse James.**

*Question:* I've heard a lot about the cowboy's $20.00 horse and $40.00 saddle. What did an outfit really cost?—Ed Little, Kearney, Nebraska.
*Answer:* The costs of a cowpoke's equipment varied in different localities. The Rapid City *Journal* of December 31, 1938, carried a letter on this subject by O. C. Lapp, a cowhand in the Black Hills in the 1880's.

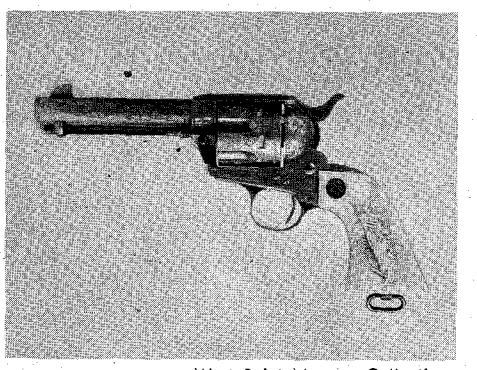
> "There wasn't a fifty dollar saddle on the roundup. Those high-toned saddles and ten gallon hats came in vogue with the drugstore and rodeo cowboys. When I was riding in '87 I could buy crackin' good high-heeled boots from four to six dollars a pair. But I DID buy a pair once for $10.00 from a bootmaker on Lame Johnny Creek.
> "You could buy a good Cheyenne or Vacillin tree saddle for $35.00 to $40.00. I got a beauty, used but three seasons, for $25.00. A man could get a good steel curb bit with rowel on it for $1.50; and spurs you could scratch them all over with at from $1.50 to $2.50. Our California breeches cost us $7.50 a shot; our Stetsons cost us five dollars, and they weren't those haystacks that the dudes wear today."



**Cockfighting in a western pit.**

*Question:* Is there any place in the West where a man can go and see a cockfight without being arrested?—K. Glidden, Boise, Idaho.
*Answer:* Cockfighting is entirely legal in New Mexico. If I remember correctly, it was a few years back that the State Legislature allowed it by statute.

*Question:* Where are General Patton's pistols? And is it true he carried only Peacemakers?—J. Y. Teller, Yreka, California.
*Answer:* General Patton's two Peacemakers are in the West Point Museum. Patton also affected a short-nosed Magnum. It, too, is in the collection at West Point.



West Point Museum Collections

**General G. S. Patton Jr.'s SA Colt M1873 revolver.**

## Homestead Honeymoon

*(Continued from page 29)*

Turning, I saw a large, fat-bellied man in blue overalls and a tiny woman in dark calico coming briskly toward us.

"Howdy, neighbors!" The man grinned amiably. "My name's Jed Ellsworth. I live in a new house hid over on the other side of those trees. This's my wife Ellie."

Ellie took my hand and squeezed it fervently. She seemed to be hardly more than a girl with her pretty eyes and fair skin.



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"I sure was glad when I saw that smoke comin' from your fire this mornin'. I told Jed I jus' knew it was the new neighbors we been expectin'. Sure gets lonesome for me out here even if I do have kids," she said warmly. "A woman likes another woman aroun' to talk woman-talk to onct in a while."

"Plan on buildin' right away?" Jed asked.

"Thought we'd build a little along the same days I'm tryin' to plant a little, too. No 'if and an' '—we've gotta get up a crop," said Burt.

"I got a nice big tent we ain't usin'. We made out with it till we got our big four rooms put up. Y'all welcome to use it," offered Jed.

Two days later we moved in the tent. How comfortable and spacious it was compared to the jolting wagon!

On the first day of Burt's turn-plowing, three lanky young strangers, wearing six-shooters, rode up on horseback. Two were sandy-haired and blue-eyed; the other dark, handsome and impassive.

"Howdy strangers! Whatcha doin' here?" one of the blue-eyed men called brazenly.

"Why—I'm workin' my land."

"How come *your* land when I got it leased for cattle grazin' three years?"

Watching from inside the tent, I saw Burt's face turn white as he answered, "Why, man, I don't understand—I bought this land last fall from Will Fennimore."

"Wait till I see Fennimore—then you'll see me again! But right now you stop that plowin'," said the spokesman, rubbing his gun holster suggestively. Then he abruptly turned around and galloped away with his partners.

Burt turned from his plow dejectedly, calling for me to go with him over to the Ellsworth's. They had finished their planting and we found them sitting leisurely on their front porch. The yard seemed full of barefoot children of all sizes with smudged faces, stopping play to stare shyly at us as we entered the gate.

"Had some visitors while ago?" queried Jed. "I saw 'em pass by. Guess they tried to bully you, too, eh? Those gunslingers sure don't like to see new fo'ks comin' into these parts!"

"Who on earth are they?" I asked.

"The Higgins boys—Hank and Two-Gun. The dark one is Pony Starr—some of old Belle's blood kin, so I heerd. They steal cattle as far off as Texas and slip 'em back here. They're goin' ag'in the law totin' them guns all the time, but Sheriff's too scairt—ever'body else, too. They told Sheriff they couldn't live without guns and they dared him to take 'em. Get 'em drunk and mad and they might even kill a preacher."

Next day Burt and I rode horseback into town, four miles away, to see Will Fennimore. With his Indian wife and five daughters he lived in a large white house, the finest in the country.

Ellie had already told me that Will Fennimore, like a lot of greedy white men, had married a Choctaw to acquire more land, but when his pretty wife charmingly gave us hospitality in her orderly, well-furnished home, I felt that he must have married her solely because he loved her. She was gracious, apparently educated, and dignified.

She served coffee and tea cakes in the parlor, and, through opened doors, I caught brief glimpses of her three grown daughters as they did chores about the house. They were black-eyed beauties with golden skin and jet hair done up in plaits.

Afterward, while we were sitting on the wide front porch, Will Fennimore came home in a handsome fringed surrey with fine bay horses. He was a big Irish type with auburn hair and curling moustache, his fine dark serge suit set off by a gold watch chain.

He approached us in a suave, overly-friendly manner.

When we disclosed Burt's conflict with the strangers the day before, he exclaimed, "Why, I can't imagine—let's see—how could that be? Oh, I did lease some of my land, but—By Jove! I do recollect leasing grazing rights to Higgins." He snapped his fingers in recollection. "I hate that, by Jove! But say—I can make it up to you. Don't worry."

He agreed to give us full jurisdiction over three eighty-acre tracts of grass until the three-year lease on our land expired. The tracts were a mile from town; thus, Burt would have to go three miles from our place during harvesting periods.

ON RETURNING home we found things in a state of abject disorder. Grocery bins and bowls of food left on the tables had been turned over, their contents consumed. Pots, pans, books and other items were strewn about. Mud splotched my new quilt and white tablecloth. I started crying.

"I was afraid of this," said Burt. "Those dirty wild hogs of Ellsworth's runnin' loose—but it's our fault. This is open country. A man's supposed to guard what he wants protected."

We decided at once to build a new abode 14' x 16' under a towering hickory. We drove to a lumber mill ten miles away the next day and bought pine. I worked beside Burt and the house was finished within a week. Even though there was no paper on the walls, no rugs on the floor, no porch or paint on the outside, it seemed a little mansion to us.

The first three years of our new life were meagerly sustained by a hard-earned living from the grass plots. During the harvest seasons I arose at four o'clock, and by five Burt was off to work on horseback. Then I would cook dinner—huge quantities of beans, potatoes, bread, beef, pork, and fried fruit pies—to carry in the covered wagon to the harvesters. After the meal I would ride home on horseback, leaving the wagon for Burt to use in the field.

Many hardships followed our first ones. A drought came one June and lingered until the next. Huge chicken snakes often robbed our hens' nests. Burt suffered severe attacks of malaria for over two years. But these drawbacks were minor, in my opinion, compared to the constant fear I harbored when the Higgins brothers and Pony Starr came into our midst when Burt was not at home, for these men were truly hardened killers of outlaw heritage. Often they circled our farm in a show-offish manner, whooping and yelling back and forth to each other.

The bright side of our relationship with these men was the obvious mutual liking between them and Burt. Burt's innate love for humanity was strengthened by his firm philosophy stemming from a strict religious rearing which had stressed the Golden Rule and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Whenever I made even a slight complaint against his new friends he defended them.

"They're good hearted and can't help the way they are. They were raised to


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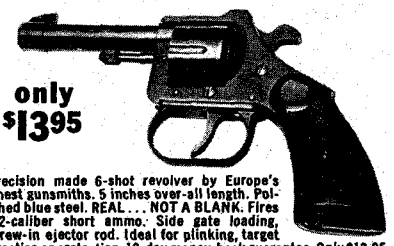

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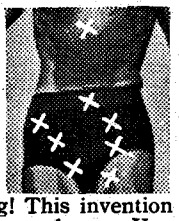

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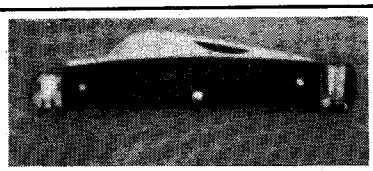

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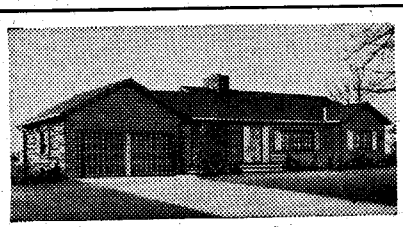

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live by their own code, and they believe they've got to live the way they do to survive."

I believe Burt's attitude engendered an unusual approval toward us from all three men. Every time they found him outside the house they stopped by for friendly chit-chat. They became confidential with him, eventually revealing one Monday morning that a gun battle with the White Hood Gang at Porum the day before had resulted in their killing fifteen men who had surrounded an abandoned house where they were barricaded.

Pony Starr expressed regret that some of the victims were boys of only sixteen and seventeen.

One cold winter morning of the year of the drought, when our bank account was running low and our food supply scant, Pony rode up to our house with a hearty "Hullo!"

Burt rushed outside and, hardly before he had time to extend a greeting, he came back in the house with a canvas-wrapped supply of fresh beef.

"Pony butchered one of his yearlings this morning and he just dropped by to share some meat," said Burt, his face aglow with gratitude.

For many days we feasted on steaks, roast and stew.

After the lease on our land expired we planted cotton, corn, a truck patch, and set out fruit trees. The outlaws leased grazing land farther away, so we seldom saw them, but occasionally our weekly newspaper from McAlester linked their names with other suspects of cattle theft, bank robbery, gun battles and murder.

Our first crop produced twenty bales of cotton, plenty of vegetables and watermelons. We also produced the usual amount of chickens, eggs, turkeys, milk, butter, beef and pork. We added a new room to our house, dug a cellar which we stored with canned food, bought a few new clothes and began attending church regularly in town.

Our fourth year in the Oklahoma hills compensated for the three years of denial and hardship.

## Lady Luck and the Life of Pete

*(Continued from page 13)*

ruffian's ears. He had the mob entranced. Even the miserable Pete was listening with keen interest.

"For the virtue of Columbia, the immaculate—and for Pine Log, our sister-camp in purity—give the man a fair trial!"

The mob roared disapproval but made no move to kick Coffroth out of its way.

"Let twelve stalwart miners pronounce the verdict," Coffroth shouted. "Guilty! I repeat, gentlemen—*Guilty!* 'Let him hang!' will cry the sons of the bountiful gulch. And the diamond jewel on the crown of the Empress—the Empress of Right and Justice——"

Now the gentlemen were getting impatient, even Pete. Too much talk and not a single invitation to go have a drink. A sobering up process was taking place in Pete's thick head.

The lawyer's purpose was to talk against time, to keep the rabble entranced until the inevitable should happen—the arrival of the mounted and bona fide law from Sonora, the county seat. Then Coffroth would have a wealthy client to defend and Queen Justice would triumph over Judge Lynch.

A FIRE had been kindled to footlight the show. Coffroth was handsome to look upon and fascinating to hear. Fascinating, that is, until Sheriff Solomon and his deputies reined up their horses in the glow. Coffroth moved off his stand of oratory, cocky under his tall hat. He juggled his walking cane and felt himself to be a very satisfactory man.

Solomon was as efficient as he was unhandsome. His body and soul possessed all the ingredients that make up the brute. He had dedicated his life to arresting men, jailing and hanging them. And he firmly believed that though free to be committed anywhere, crimes should be atoned for in Sonora, the domain of Solomon and the shackles, the world's choice location for a gallows.

The late John Parote was an intelligent man. But, he had many friends *not* of the same mettle. In its sublime stupidity, the mob just stood while the sheriff and aides crashed their party and spoiled it.

"Gentlemen," the sheriff began, "pardon me. I have a word for you fine men. I am taking this prisoner to Sonora. He will remain there until his trial, and it will be a *fair* trial. You may rely on that fact, gentlemen."

A murmur took the crowd—angered. Feet shuffled, mouths grumbled. It had no use for the written law. Literacy had no place in the Stanislaus Mining District. Placering required no formal education, and who wants to read a warrant anyway?

"So," Solomon concluded his speech, "I am taking Peter Nicholas to Sonora with me. It is the best course, as you will all agree. Thank you, gentlemen."

But the gentlemen did not agree. A whisper passed from one to another and a stampede was made to capture the prize. It was a good try but unsuccessful. Pete's protective belt of lawmen was impregnable, and while the crowd fumed and backed off in retreat, a saddled horse was led under the tree. Pete was detached from the rope and boosted astride. His ankles were lashed to the stirrups, his hands bound to the saddle-horn. Then the company reined for home and Sonora.

Chagrined, wounded to the quick, the



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mob left the fire to burn itself out. But, happily, disappointment can be dealt with. It can be drowned in the wetness of whiskey, in the fickleness of faro, and in the solace offered by painted women. So to the bars, to the tables they went.

NOBODY LIKED Peter Nicholas or cared whether he lived or died. He was filthy of flesh and worse in mind—but he was rich. Saving him from the mob's rope could hint of the wondrous works Coffroth could perform, and Solomon's rope was just as deadly as the mob's. Even more painful, because Solomon was a showman. If Pete would divulge the whereabouts of his many hidden pokes, and the pounds upon pounds of gold dust they contained, then perhaps Solomon would take a bribe; and, in the dark of night, Pete would be allowed to climb the high Sierra. But no, perish the thought! Solomon could never be bribed, or deprived of the pleasure of hanging a man. So Coffroth, after he'd done his little stint, walked off to bide his time.

Peter Nicholas celebrated New Year's Day in the Sonora jail. He awaited the day of trial by jury with no emotion whatever. No pain showed in his eyes; for if it should, then Sheriff Solomon would just intensify it for his own diabolical enjoyment. But Pete was no toy for a sheriff to play with, nor was he an ordinary man. He was a bullheaded Teuton. He awaited his fate as a model prisoner, sitting in his cell like a lump of cold damp putty.

While both Pete and Solomon looked toward *the* day, California's little political circles consolidated into one gigantic vortex. Benicia, on the shore of Carquinas Strait, in the San Francisco area, was made the temporary seat of government. The legislators convened there on the first Monday in January, 1854. Hearty enthusiasm ruled the congress. Benicia, inside and outside the hall, shouted down any argument that arose against its virtues, and even noisier were Sacramento, Monterey, Vallejo and San Jose. A capital city is a profitable thing, so there were special inducements.

But not a man of the dignified assembly was having as much fun as C. H. Alverding, the Columbia merchant, who long since had cleaned up from his floor the blood that had belonged to John Parote.

His store, now as always, enjoyed popular Pine Log patronage. Singly and in groups arrived the boys from over the hill. They would stock up on provisions before indulging in debauchery. And once within the store they encountered an unexpected and side-splitting farce.

"Boys" Alverding greeted them, "we're signing up Pine Log to be the capital of California!"

It was January, but the thick molasses moved in the barrel, so vibrating was the laughter and the stamping of feet.

"Only Pine Log signatures allowed on this petition," the merchant said, sliding form, pen and ink across the counter. "So put yours there, and you'll get to be the governor yet."

The unlettered miners had their signatures written in for them. Other coarse hands inscribed theirs with glee. As each line was filled the guffaws came loud, uncouth but exceedingly good-natured. The joke was a tremendous success. All agreed that it was too bad John Parote didn't lead off on the roster and so make for himself a good and lasting memorial. Because this document—as sure as shooting—would be one to be preserved by the State of California for the amusement of future generations.

Although John Parote was buried deep in the gulch he loved, he was far from being forgotten. Both the Columbia and Pine Log residents were content in the knowledge that his murderer awaited the most absolute of dooms. The trial itself would be pleasant, the verdict to be rendered by twelve merciless men. But the hanging to follow would be *the* sensation, what with the exhibitionist Solomon at the rope.

And nothing on earth could commute Pete's death sentence to one of life imprisonment—nothing save an order signed by John Bigler himself, the Governor of California. And why would John Bigler care to do such a thing, when Columbia, Pine Log and Solomon were so worked up in anticipation? Pete was an alien, and what Californian gave a damn for an alien? Why feed and pamper a foreigner in the heap of rock and dampness called San Quentin?

Besides, the governor was busy at other tasks. He was in a quandary as to where along the coast his state capital was to be. Until the Legislature decided California didn't know its seat from its elbow.

The morning of February 25, 1854, was bathed in brilliant sunshine. The Sonora courtroom was especially bright, bustling with judicial activity. The town's entire populace packed the room, as did masculine groups from Columbia and Pine Log. Among the latter were the much-bereaved friends of John Parote, who remembered how he used to love to attend gatherings such as this, and, being an educated man, always had pertinent remarks to make afterwards.

Sheriff Solomon wore his tailored suit, polished boots, diamond stickpin, monster watch and chain—and, his most diabolical leer. His deputies were in attendance. This group stood, it didn't sit. The judge was there, a dismal man who couldn't swallow any verdict but one. The jury sat in its box. In short, just everyone of importance was there, including the most important personage of all, complete with shackles. It was refreshing to see Peter Nicholas sober for once in his sorry life.

Solomon had his say. Next, a couple of Parote cronies testified, praising the deceased for an honorable man, his death a loss to the Mother Lode. The judge and jury listened, then the judge hollered, "Git!"

The jury went to huddle in a corner of the room. Twelve heads shook and nodded; smilingly they returned after two minutes' deliberation. They looked well pleased with themselves. As expected, the foreman shouted a satisfying, "Guilty!"

IT COULDN'T be otherwise, and Peter Nicholas had long since resigned himself to Sheriff Solomon and God Almighty. All the judge needed now was the fixing of a date. He let fly some tobacco juice into a bench-side spittoon to clear his throat for a word or two. But before he could grip his gavel—Damn it! Something happened in the court. The trial was going amiss!

For the foreman remained standing after he had declared Pete guilty. He neglected to sit down because he had a suggestion to make—one that was unani-


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mously agreeable with the eleven other members in the box.

"We the jury," he said, *"recommend mercy."*

Everyone gaped with shocked surprise.

"Your honor, we make the motion that Peter Nicholas shall *not* be hanged by the neck."

His honor twitched at the lip. He clutched his gavel feverishly.

"True, Peter Nicholas killed a man, one John Parote, in full view of a dozen witnesses. That is a fact that can't be denied."

Sheriff Solomon's eyes were glassy, his rope-hand limp.

"True indeed, Peter Nicholas drew his knife for *one* purpose and *one* alone—to deprive John Parote of life. John Parote was a laudable citizen, a good man to be mourned by all who knew him. But——"

The murderer couldn't believe his unwashed ears. He was hanged and gone to Heaven.

"But Peter Nicholas killed John Parote in the spirit of drunken fun, your honor."

The foreman went on to explain that anyone is apt to slaughter when under the influence, and beseeched the court to consider the potency of the swill served in the Columbia saloons—the sheer redeye, the rotgut of it all. It wasn't Pete who had done the dirty work, but the whiskey he had consumed. Life imprisonment was sufficient punishment for a poor, helpless inebriate.

A funereal hush took the courtroom. The judge was truly wrestling with his emotions. He puffed, he blew. His face was brick-red, evidence of some upheaval within him. He tried hard to maintain dignity of the bench, but God knows the weakness of human flesh.

"Get the hell!" he thundered.

The jury froze in the judicial storm. Each man's mind turned to thoughts of exit.

The judge bellowed as pandemonium took the courtroom. "You half-witted, milk-livered, tripe-gutted——"

The jurymen leapt from the box, their destination the door. En route they dodged the kicks and blows of the courtroom audience. But before something really violent could happen, they were out of doors, each man enjoying the serene sunshine of the lower gulch.

Now the judge stood unaided by other peoples' opinions. He pounded the gavel; order was resumed. He declared Peter Nicholas guilty of murder and sentenced him to be hanged. He named April 7, next, for the event and like everyone else hoped the weather would be congenial. Sheriff Solomon boomed a thunderous sigh of relief.

Now strange things *will* happen in this wide world. The twenty-fifth day of February, 1854, was a fateful one in the life of Pete; it was a joyous one for the anticipating Solomon; and the citizenry of Columbia, Sonora and Pine Log had heard the verdict and now need only hold their patience. The big show was billed. Kiddies and their mothers could look forward to the picnic—to all sorts of goodies laid out close to the scaffold.

That day of February 25, 1854, was a mighty auspicious milestone in the history of California. It is a date all native sons and Iowa transplants think back on with pride. For at approximately the same moment the Sonora judge assigned to the hangman the arrogant life of Peter Nicholas, the legislators convened at Benicia proclaimed the decision all California awaited—that Sacramento would be the capital city, then and forevermore!

SO PINE LOG wouldn't get to be the capital after all! And the fault was Alverding's, for he didn't give the camp *half* a chance. He'd gotten the Pine Logites' signatures, all right, one following the other down the pages of the petition—contributions of nearly every man resident in the sorry camp. All agreed it was one grand joke, caused many a hearty laugh. But jokes in the minds of men are like toys in the hands of children. They hold their fascination while they are shiny-new, but they stale when the gloss wears off. After Alverding had the petition filled, he left it neglected on his counter top. He hadn't forwarded it to the Benicia convention, and now, of course, it was too late.

The last few days of February went off the calendar, then March passed, and the first day of April dawned fresh and promising. Now but seven days of misery remained for Pete, who sat shackled and wishful—anxious for the show to be over; wishing himself blissfully dead, his carcass buried and forgotten—as his

James W. Coffroth

many gold-pokes were buried and forgotten down in Columbia gulch.

Just one more week 'til Hanging Day! The entire Stanislaus Mining District was resolved to get to Sonora early enough to find a suitable spot close to the gallows. The attendance would be heavy, folks from far and wide. Some would put up at the hotel days in advance.

Among the arrivals was a certain personality, female by gender, held in highest esteem by mining and prospecting men. Her name was Lady Luck.

This miners' pixie entered the town in style, riding the shoulder of Peter Nicholas' attorney, J. W. Coffroth, who possessed the craftiness of a weasel and the patience of Job when it came to courting the almighty dollar. He quickly conferred with his client.

"I'm going to pull your carcass out of the fire," said Coffroth, "but I'll have to know where some of your gold is hidden before I can accomplish that remarkable feat."

Pete suspected a trick, and said so.

A trick! . . . Why, of course! The trick



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was in this lawyer's fetching personality, his gift of the spoken word. And in the precious fact that he had, as a close friend of long standing, John Bigler, Governor of California.

Pete considered a moment, then accepted the bargain. Within a half hour after he entered, Coffroth came out of the Sonora jail with information any Stanislaus man would have given his right eye for—the whereabouts of the gold Pete Nicholas had cached in the Columbia gulch.

Coffroth had lied. He didn't know the Governor from Adam's uncle. A dirty trick had been handed an already condemned man. He had won his trust and taken his wealth, and the poor wretch would look for a reprieve right up to the minute Solomon's foot released the trap. But, of course, there might be a way. John Bigler was a politician, one said to be easily bought. Perhaps a call at the Governor's office could be arranged, simply to congratulate the man on having his official chair located in Sacramento, a city with a delightful climate. And, just for the sake of ballast, this lawyer would have a couple of Pete's gold pokes in his hands, and sooner or later the topic would swing around to Pete, and the kindly John Bigler would——

Hell no! It wouldn't work. Pete was an Austrian, not a voter. John Bigler was kind only to bona fide voters.

THE DAY was still young, but time all too short. Coffroth walked into Columbia the next day twirling his cane as though he had nothing better to do. Satisfied with everything, he reached into his pocket for pipe and pouch, for a smoke would be soothing for the nerves.

He mouthed the pipe and opened the pouch and found he was out of tobacco.

He looked about for a store, one that could vend him a pound or so of the weed. He was at the corner of Jackson and Main, not more than twenty feet from the entrance to Alverding's store. Here was luck—the best kind of luck for a man needing tobacco. Alverding's store, of all places!

He entered. Perhaps he didn't feel a weight on his shoulder, but it was there nevertheless. It was Lady Luck, bearing a gift from God to the shackled, trusting and hopeful Peter Nicholas.

Alverding liked to chat. The lawyer told him of his fondness for Columbia, a pleasant town, clean foothill air, far from the fog and soot of the coast. Too bad the visit must be brief—pressing business, you know. "Lucky folk, you Columbians——"

"And, oh yes! I need some tobacco. My pouch is empty."

Alverding picked up a small scoop preparatory to weighing out a pound of bulk. "You are taking the evening stage out, sir?" he said.

"Yes, indeed. I must get home."

"You ought to stay over until the 7th, at least," Alverding said. "The execution will be quite a performance, with Solomon honoring Nicholas at the rope. This will be a pure case of justice well done, sir, and nothing more."

"I feel it will be an exciting day for Sonora," Coffroth said. "And I understand the murder happened right here, Mr. Alverding."

Alverding, scoop in hand, pointed to the center of the floor. "Yes," he said, "Pete drew his knife there, and John Parote bled to death where you are standing. We pinned Pete in the chair 'til the mob took over. A sorry rogue, that one, and the world will be well rid of him."

Now Alverding was bent low. In a lower drawer behind the counter was the lawyer's favorite brand. "I'd sure hate to be in Pete's boots on the seventh," the lawyer heard Alverding say.

But Coffroth didn't comment, for his glance had fallen to the counter. There rested a document, one seemingly neglected, alone with the dust that covered it. It had been carelessly pushed aside from the path of trade. Its outer page was coarsely embellished with an inky legend:

> **We the citizens of Pine Log, California, do hereby petition the Legislature——**

Enough!

While Alverding fumbled with the scoop below, the lawyer with lightning speed transferred the long-forgotten petition from the counter top into his pocket. Again risen to daylight, Alverding weighed out the black satisfying stuff. The stranger paid for it, and it was expensive to be sure.

"Thank you, sir, and good day," Alverding said. And he added for good measure as his customer reached the door, "Good luck be with you on your journey—and at the end of it."

Back at the Broadway Hotel, within a locked room, the petition was given a thorough appraisal. There they were, one below the other, three full pages of them, representing almost the entire Pine Log population, the signatures—all as real as the gold in the gulch. Neat or otherwise, each name was written in with heartfelt sincerity. Only one name was missing—that of John Parote—and he would have been the first to sign had not Peter Nicholas interfered.

The lawyer smiled to the best of his winning personality. His aching conscience took a turn for the better. He tore off the first page and took up an identical sheet of legal stationery. And on it, with inked pen and sweeping hand, he wrote a solemn prayer and petition to John Bigler, Governor of California. To the effect that the undersigned citizens of Pine Log, ardent voters all, do petition His Excellency, in the name of right and justice, that the death sentence now upon their well-loved fellow citizen, Peter Nicholas, be commuted to one of life imprisonment.

The buried pokes could wait. There'd be ample time in this wonderful life to return and borrow a shovel. It was haste that now mattered. The afternoon coach was boarded and by the grace of Lady Luck, the lawyer found John Bigler sitting in his brand-new gubernatorial seat in Sacramento. The governor was sympathetic, an order was penned, signed, and sent by swift messenger to Sonora—and Solomon wept.

Instead of death, Pete got from one to ten years of discipline in the state prison. He was transferred from the Sonora jail to San Quentin. Pete wasn't a model prisoner. A year passed and good behavior had not yet set him free. Then two, then three. But during the fourth year he reduced his time of his own accord. When prisoners escaped from San Quentin in those days they did so by stampeding in herds. One such mass exit included the Austrian, Peter Nicholas, who by carefully avoiding all future contact with the Stanislaus Mining District must have forever remained a free man.


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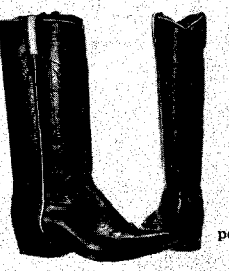

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## Wild Old Days

*(Continued from page 33)*

a postoffice by that name for two years in the '90s. Or Casket! There's a town name for you.

There was a Dea and a couple of Deep Holes, too.

But why Elbow? It had a postoffice somewhere in Esmeralda County in 1881.

And how about Fluorine and Flotz or Haas and Heinz? If you don't care for them, try Heply and Hercules. Or Ice to go along with Elbow and Bar.

What do you make of Jett, Jiggs, Job's and Joy? They all were Nevada postoffices.

If you aren't a Luckyboy maybe your Lucca had run out.

Or you had your mail cancelled at Marble, Manse or Marmol if you had the Mazuma to travel around.

But why should anybody name a postoffice Mud Meadows? That's reaching pretty far for a title.

There was Ora and Oro, too. And Pavlak, Peavine, Pedro, Pigeon and a pair of Pintos, the latter in adjoining counties.

And a Queen, who undoubtedly didn't live in Ragtown, Raspberry or Red House!

There was a Stone House, too, and also a Strawberry.

We had a Toyland that may have been Tiptop, both were in Humboldt county.

And, of course, a Wildhorse.

Those are just a few of Nevada's postoffices, picked at random from the Postal Directory.

I still want to know who names things.

## RATTLESNAKE ERADICATOR

By OSCAR H. ROESNER

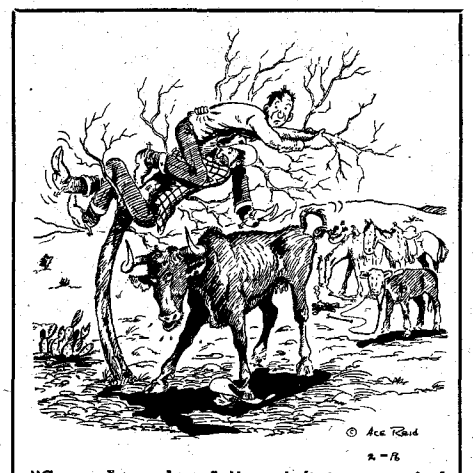
The rattlesnake sometimes proves a real pest in the high Sierras of California. Such was the case one summer on a cattle ranch in Sierra Valley where a fine crop of natural hay was so thickly infested with the poisonous reptiles that it could not be cut, according to Leon Hamilton of Sacramento, foreman on the ranch at the time. And the snakes were so thick around the camp-house itself that the cowboys and others were in constant danger of being bitten. But although the hay crop could not be harvested, a way was found to make the camp-house and near surroundings safe for use. About three acres around the house were fenced and a drove of hogs driven into the enclosure.

Now while a rattler's bite is dangerous for a human, it is almost harmless for a hog because of the heavy coat of hair, thick, tough hide and layers of fat. These keep poison from the rattler's fangs from getting into the hog's bloodstream. And since hogs are quite fond of rattlesnake meat, they pay little attention to the bites, tear the snake to pieces, chew it up and down it with gusto. Such the hogs did in this case and made the camp-house and fenced plot safe for the users for the remainder of the range season.

## SKULLDUGGERY

By COURTNEY LORENZEN

A SMOOTH-POLISHED human skull leers at one from the showcase in the Herman Oliver-Charlie Brown Museum in the unique and once-thriving gold rush town of Canyon City in Oregon's John Day Valley. Its story is one of the most diabolical but interesting to come out of that region.



"Sorry Lem, but I jist ain't too worried about your hat."

To get either in or out of John Day Valley with a loaded packtrain was a monstrous feat at it is completely encircled by mountain ridges averaging over a mile in elevation. Today, it is still 100 miles to the nearest railroad. Horses, mules and oxen were the only means of transportation until the advent of the automobile.

Berry Wey and John Gallager operated a packtrain between the fabulously rich gold rush town of Canyon City and The Dalles.

It was near the end of April, 1863. On the backs of some sixty exhausted, sweat-darkened mules were bags containing $80,000 worth of gold—the mint value $20.00 an ounce. This was the result of one clean-up from the seething, searching mass of gold-thirsty miners who had poured into the area and thrown up a tent city which, by the end of 1863, was larger than Portland. Its population neared 10,000 with a take of $50,000,000 from the sixteen-mile-long John Day Valley.

The gold, delivered at The Dalles, would be shipped to the mint in San Francisco via the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean.

Gallager carefully checked each mule. Trustworthy and conscientious, he had taken the responsibility for the safe delivery of the precious load.

Wey sat in the shade on a nearby rock and polished the handle of his belt knife. He was small of stature, restless, inclined to verbosity. His ready gun, sharp knife and ironic sense of humor served as defense mechanisms.

At Cold Camp near Mitchell they halted for the night. The mules, loaded to the guards, were relieved of the precious treasure, fed and fettered. Wey prepared the beds. Gallager stewed up the hardtack and salt pork. This they washed down with black tea and silence.

Gallager rose from his haunches, sacked his tin cup and plate and walking a short distance, leaned his large, loosely-knit frame against the trunk of a young juniper. He breathed in the balmy-brisk ozone so characteristic of the Oregon mountains in spring. The velvet black sky accentuated the brilliance of the stars.

"Don't know about you but I'm ready to vamoose ta bed," Wey shouted. He yawned noisily, swore expertly as a boot stuck and climbed under his blanket fully dressed.

"Wish we were bedding down on our way back," Gallager said, looking apprehensively at the covered heap between the bed and the fire. He kicked the logs apart, threw the water from the soaking cast-iron fry pan over the coals, removed his boots and rolled up in his blanket on the pungent boughs beside Wey.

THE SOUGHING of the pine in the gulch and the occasional stamp or snuffle from the nearby mules were the only sounds heard by Wey as he kept his silent and motionless vigil. The darkness and the non-existent witnesses assisted him as he stealthily rose in his blanket, belt knife in hand, and expertly slit the throat of his trusting, sleep-drugged partner. He rolled the body into his blanket and dragged it to the base of the juniper tree. He returned and dropped panting on the evergreen boughs. He sat wiping and polishing his cherished knife before settling again beneath his blanket.

Just before dawn Way placed the body, wrapped in the blood-soggy blanket, in a shallow, hastily-dug grave. He covered it with loose mountain soil and decomposed rock. He buried the gold much deeper.

On his carefully-timed arrival in Canyon City, Wey was confronted with many queries.

"Whar's Gallager? Whar's the supplies? No pans? No jeans? Been waiting ten days for a clean shirt. What about grub? Where's the salt pork?"

Wey was ready for them. "Gallager vamoosed to join the Hudson Bay Company. So I bought him out. Took ever penny I could scratch to buy his half but I done it."

"You mean he's quit Canyon City?"

"Yep! Delivered the dust, made a deal and vamoosed. Said he was only scratchin' out grub skinnin' this train. So I made myself a deal."

He sounded convincing but there were doubters. Gallager had friends who thought they knew him.

Wey swaggered about the Canyon for several days repeating his story many times. On the third day after his return, three grub-staked prospectors from Portland dumped their packs at the bar of the Strawberry Saloon and announced, "Found a body near Cold Camp! Anybody missing? Been dug up by damn coyotes."

Suspecting friends of Gallager's went up to the top of the ridge and were able to identify and properly bury the remains. In the meantime, Canyon City's sheriff ran down Berry Wey and returned him in irons to the tiny rock jail, there to await the return of the men who had gone to Cold Camp.

Miners and mine owners alike hung together when it came to safeguarding the golden treasure in which all had a share.

Wey was put astride a coffin, hastily built of rough-hewn, unpainted pine and placed on a mule-drawn wagon. He stubbornly refused to divulge the hiding place of the gold-filled bags. The coyotes weren't interested but proper authorities were able to unearth them later.

The motley crowd, crying abuse and urging on the hanging, followed the wagon to the cemetery where a crudely-built scaffold stood near a freshly-dug, open grave. The noose was placed around the murderer's neck, the mule quickly prodded and justice done with expediency.



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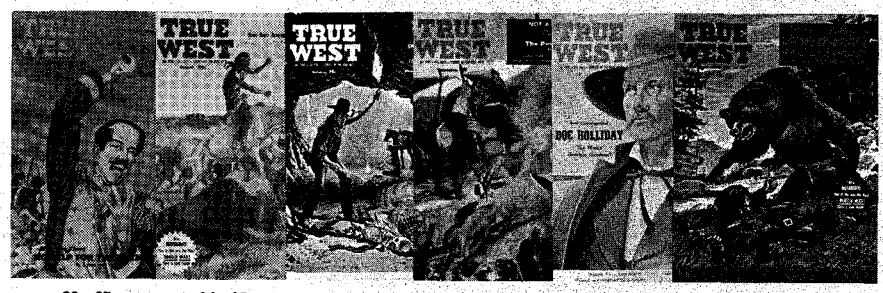

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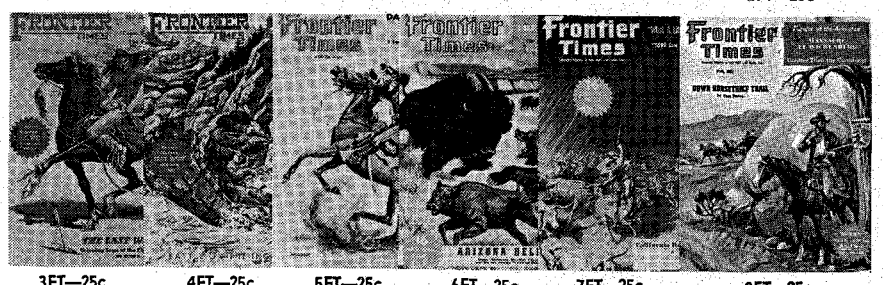

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## "A LOT OF BULL"

By VIRGINIA B. WEDDLE

This quiz is a lot of Bull and strictly for all old-time cowboys; drugstore ones better not start on this one! Give yourself ten points for each right answer. Don't cheat! A score of 80 is a lot of Bull!

1. BULL - - - Gold or silver bars
2. BULL - - - To throw a steer
3. BULL - - A ball of lead
4. BULL - - - A steer
5. BULL - - - - The center of a target
6. BULL - One cruel to others
7. BULL - - - Enclosure for prisoners
8. BULL - - - - The croaker
9. BULL - - - - A catfish
10. BULL - - - - A new's item

**Solution:**

1. Bullion
2. Bulldog
3. Bullet
4. Bullock
5. Bull's eye
6. Bully
7. Bullpen
8. Bullfrog
9. Bullhead
10. Bulletin

## Was Wyatt Earp Really a Deputy U. S. Marshal?

*(Continued from page 31)*

19, 1882, on Marshal Dake.")

This report could refer to only one of the Earp brothers, Wyatt. Morgan was dead and Virgil was in California recovering from his wounds. Warren Earp was with his brother, but in the face of Warren's youth and inexperience, Dake would have hardly chosen him as a lawman over his brother Wyatt.

From this information it seems that Virgil, Wyatt, and Morgan were all deputy U. S. marshals. Virgil went to Tombstone as a deputy U. S. marshal since he took the oath of office in Yavapai County just a few days before he moved to Tombstone. Morgan and Wyatt were later appointed to work with their brother. After Virgil was wounded and Morgan was murdered, Wyatt remained to avenge the death of his brother.

From the evidence available in the National Archives, coupled with that in the District Clerk's office in Tucson, we see that the Earp brothers had federal authority from first to last in Tombstone.

# I Saw Wyatt Earp's Commission

By TOM BAILEY

AS ADDITIONAL information to Gary Roberts' evidence showing that Wyatt Earp was a legitimate U.S. deputy marshal, I offer the following:

I met Wyatt Earp and knew him in the early twenties when I was a newspaper reporter in Oakland, California, where he and his wife lived for a time. An interview with him was the occasion of our meeting and it resulted in my being at his home on several occasions for dinner and he and his wife's coming to my house once or twice. I recall that I interviewed him on radio one evening and this brought in a flood of letters asking questions about him and Tombstone that I could not answer. Seeking answers to them brought us closer together.

One evening at his home he showed me his commission as a deputy U.S. marshal. At that time there was no controversy over whether he was a legitimate deputy or not and I asked him few questions about it. I do not remember by whom it was signed but it did bear the seal of the Attorney General of the United States which was impressive. It was the first commission of its kind I had ever seen and I am sure it was as genuine as Wyatt's diamond ring which he had won in a poker game at Goldfield, Nevada, and for which he had been offered $1,000 by an Oakland jeweler.

I remember that I asked Wyatt if he still carried a gun. He replied, "No, not any more, but I could if I wanted to, legally that is. My commission as a deputy marshal has never been revoked to my knowledge and is as legal today as it was forty years ago." He grinned. "But I'm not going to wear my gun on the strength of that because you would have a hell of a time getting anybody in Washington to say it's still legal."

When you have known a man personally as I came to know Earp you either believe what he tells you or you don't, and I believed every word Wyatt told me and still do. I am sorry now that I didn't ask a couple of hundred other questions. Had I done so, perhaps some of the things I have written about Tombstone and Earp himself since then could be greatly elaborated upon.

THERE WAS nothing about the Wyatt Earp I knew to suggest he was anything but a peaceful, quiet-mannered citizen who could get along with anybody. He was around eighty, of course, when I knew him and time was running out, but he seemed to be a kindly man in every respect. He liked to talk of the old days at Dodge and later at Tombstone, recalling amusing incidents over which he could laugh heartily. He never spoke of his gunfights unless I asked about them. I remember his saying that the fight at the O.K. Corral was something that had to happen sooner or later. Maybe it wouldn't have been at the O.K. Corral, had it happened later, but wherever it would have taken place it was inevitable.

My meeting Earp added significance to something that had happened ten years before, and this is as good a place as any to tell it. I have told it before in another magazine, some fifteen or twenty years ago, but it still will be new to many.

In 1911 I was just a cub reporter in Oakland, green as a cucumber. One day a saloon keeper on Broadway pointed out a man who had a mop handle in his hands, cleaning up the place. "There's a man who has a hell of a story to tell," he said. "He's been working here several weeks. His name is Buckskin Leslie. An old-time gunman who made the law back down in Tombstone, Arizona."

I had only vaguely heard of Tombstone and the name of Buckskin Leslie meant absolutely nothing to me. Today there is no reader of western stories who is unfamiliar with it. Buckskin Leslie was a fast gun in Tombstone and much has since been written about him.

I interviewed the man claiming to be Buckskin Leslie. Flat broke, he was willing to give me his story for anything I wanted to give him. I had never written



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for magazines but thought I could peddle his story to one of the local papers for its Sunday supplement. I gave him five dollars of my hard-earned money and spent two whole evenings in a dingy room on Fourteenth Street listening to some of the most fantastic things I had ever heard. Among other things just about as thrilling, he told me of a gunfight he had with a barber over the barber's wife. He had killed the barber cold turkey. Years later when I read about this fight it was with a bartender, not a barber. I don't know yet which it was, but anyway it did happen.

Western readers will recall the name, Johnny Ringo, and what happened to him in Turkey Creek. He was found dead by a tree, his own gun in his hand, apparently a suicide.

The way Buckskin told it, it was not a suicide. They had met that day and in spite of some difference between them over a woman, they had gone out on a toot together, visiting various places, finally ending up in the Turkey Creek Inn where they parted, according to history. Buckskin told me he left Ringo only briefly and came up to him by the tree. Ringo, who was pie-eyed drunk, threatened to shoot him. He grabbed for Ringo's gun and it went off, killing Ringo instantly. Buckskin called it a day and rode back to Tombstone. For many years there was much speculation as to how Ringo had died. When I came out in 1941 with a story about my finding Buckskin Leslie in a saloon and listening to his tale of how he killed Ringo, most of the articles that have appeared in magazines since then have conceded that Leslie may well have killed Ringo after all.

However, that is not the end of the story.

Buckskin showed me a knife wound in his abdomen received in a fight with a Mexican in 1881. It was a peculiar mark, about nine inches long, ending with a twist that made it look like the letter "J."

Later I learned that Buckskin Leslie bore such a mark, and this thoroughly identified him, for there could have been no two people knife-marked alike. The cut was vertical, ending in the peculiar twist just above the belt line.

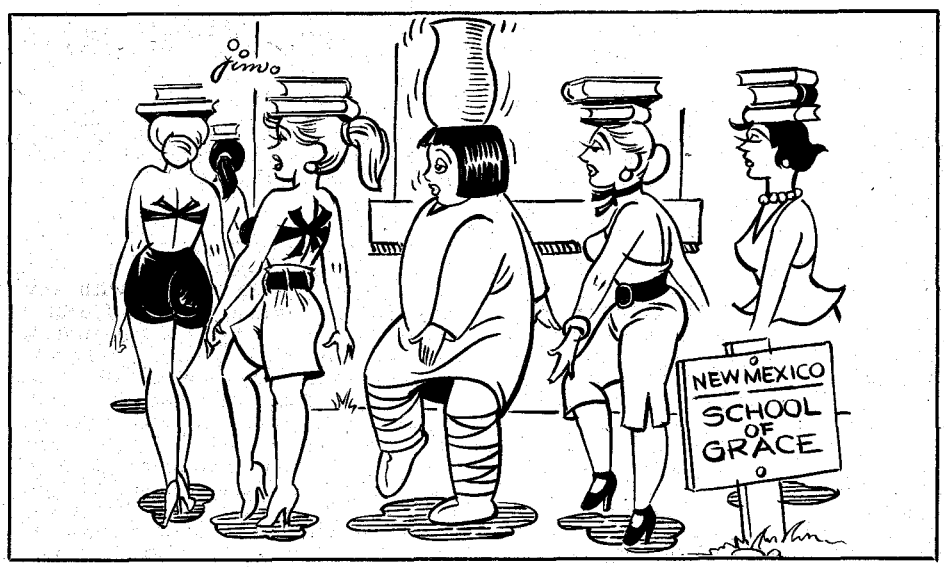
Not long after I interviewed the man calling himself Buckskin Leslie, he disappeared from his Oakland haunts. He had left the saloon and had been working in a pool hall. The owner reported the disappearance to the police and said Leslie had taken a battered-up old revolver from a desk drawer. He happened to have the serial number of the gun and it was recorded by the police.

Three years later a human skeleton was found in a canyon north of Martinez, California. Beside the remains lay an old revolver. The sheriff's office at Martinez traced the number through the Oakland police to the pool hall owner, who identified it as the one Leslie had taken.

The natural conclusion was that Leslie, growing old and feeble, had killed himself, but, other than the gun, there was never any proof that the skeleton was actually his. The fact that the man calling himself Buckskin Leslie was never seen again, was significant.

When I told Wyatt Earp about meeting Leslie and about the skeleton turning up in a brushy canyon, with an identified gun near it, he said, "That's the way Buckskin would have preferred to die. He was a proud man."

And that is the story as I know it. I'm positive Wyatt Earp was a real U.S. deputy marshal, as sure of it as I am that I'm sitting here at my typewriter sweating buckets for Old Joe who doesn't appreciate it—but he might read this, so I'll say I'm also as positive, or almost, that Buckskin Leslie finished off Johnny Ringo, though somewhat by accident.




## Truly Western

*(Continued from page 4)*

must give up any of those original plans that were conceived in your first burning golden dream, then you will join ranks with the millions who have a secure job or business, but have lost the fire inside and have lost their dream.

As an old friend of TRUE WEST I will write to advertisers and try to do my share in keeping that first dream of yours shining.—Chris Riker, Buck Meadows, California.

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### Treasure Hunter Replies

Howdy, TRUE WEST!

It was a pleasure to read Charlie Millen's letter in TRUE WEST (July-August, 1960) and it was just as surprising. You see, several of us are living in Charlie's house while he is out West and when he left he said I'd have a good publicity man working for me. For years Charlie and I collaborated as writers. We have often in the past ghost-written articles for each other and we have never had a misunderstanding. The worst I can say for him is that he is a horrible camp-cook, almost as bad as Hardrock Bill Hammond—and that means "awful!"

I most certainly am not the greatest living authority on mines and treasure. I may be the most articulate person who has had some successful experience in this line, and even this is open to question, but I can name a dozen men whose treasure experience would put me to shame.

The reservation cards are pouring in for the *Treasure Hunter's Manual,* and with them hundreds of questions. I will try to answer some of them for you.

What is needed to start treasure hunting? I've always maintained that the most important treasure hunting devices are a good head and lots of gumption. Actually, I started entirely by accident in the late '20s and my only tool was the tail-bolt from a lumber wagon. I went up to Ft. Kearney and found the old campgrounds and then started pushing the rod into the earth. When I'd hit something hard, I'd dig. Oh boy, I did a lot of digging, but I made a lot of money, too, and there was no income tax in those days.

Why do I persist in disclaiming "lost mines"? I have spent hundreds of days and driven hundreds of miles investigating individual alleged lost mines. I would estimate that I have driven a minimum of 50,000 miles in pursuit of these myths. I've even badgered some of the people who started these myths to admit they were fictional. In view of the facts I have unearthed, combined with the fact that a mine has tailings, trails, and landmarks, I cannot conceive of a lost mine. If, as so many of these prove to be, it is merely a matter of rich float or a few rich specimens, then it certainly is not a mine, but rather a misused cognomen.

Where are some localities with abundant buried treasure? I believe every county in the United States has some buried treasure. Respectable amounts of treasure have been and are found along ALL of the famous old trails in the East as well as the West. I particularly like the Oregon Trail and the Santa Fe Trail because I am familiar with their histories and have done considerable treasure-hounding in these vicinities. However, the old post roads, trails and military roads in Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania, for example, are just as plush in their concealed wealth and this is being proven and harvested every year. Right now I am having a ball finding cannonballs and odd military gear with a metal detector in Florida and Georgia. Cannonballs are worth $50.00 each.

What instruments do I use? My favorite instrument is a home-made transistorized metal detector which uses a beat frequency circuit designed by a Hughes engineer back in the early days of transistors. This circuit has been modernized by Jim Buckley and I call it the Buckley circuit. I also have been fooling around with an "Induction-Capacitance" search coil, but it is questionable and its only value may be in checking the walls, floors, and ceilings of buildings. In the final analysis, instruments are secondary; research and puzzle-solving are the elements which actually separate the men from the boys.

Are there any "ordinary guys" who ever find treasure? I know several hundreds of them—store clerks, mechanics, cowboys, prospectors, cafe owners, retired people, for example. One railroader in Wyoming has amassed enough stuff for a museum since he quit being an "instrument bug" and started reading and studying Wyoming history. He's been at it about five years and could probably sell his collection for $100,000. Not bad, for just having fun! There are many more like him, believe me.

Why do I continually endorse secrecy in treasure hunting? Try this little trick someday. Take a friend of yours and go down to Main Street or to some crowded park. Point to the sky and both of you look. Then, point to a different place and both look. Everybody else will be looking, too. Go on about your business, and then about fifteen minutes later, one of you run out in the middle of the street and start pointing and call the other to come look. Point to different places. Somebody will ask you what you see, and about that time, yell to your buddy to look somewhere else. You'll drive the town nuts. You'll see people scanning the sky for hours afterward. On the other hand, get a name as a treasure hunter and people will watch you like a hawk. When you do make a good "strike," the odds are that you'll have a lawsuit on your hands. Justified or not, lawsuits are expensive to defend. A word to the wise is sufficient. There are several other good reasons, too, which time and space do not permit mentioning.

Where can old money be sold? Numismatists pay the highest prices for old money. Most old money is worth at least twice face value, and sometimes a hundred times face value. Several big numismatic magazines are published; your local library can give you the names and addresses of them. Get a copy and watch for buyers' ads. Confederate money is worth from ten percent up to ten times face value, depending on condition, etc. It is often found in one-, two-, five-, and ten-thousand dollar bundles, and in the most unusual locations. So, if you find a bundle of Rebel bills, don't sell them cheap, especially if the ink is still bright.

How about old junk? This covers a multitude of things. Old ox-shoes, for example, are often found around old town and farm sites. They're worth at least $5.00 a pair. The old chains from the chain-traces of freight harnesses have sold for $25.00. Early rifle shell cases are worth money, as well as Civil War and pre-Civil War bullets. A good rule to follow is that if it is metal and a relic of the early days, it is worth cash. Old tongs, wheel tires, curling irons, shoe lasts, and hundreds of other items are worth more now than they cost new. Try to buy some of these in an antique shop and be convinced.

What about sunken treasure? I'm just not interested! It costs a fortune to outfit a crew to seek sunken treasure and



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the odds are just not worth it. Billions of dollars have been invested in unsuccessful sunken treasure hunts and I know of very few expeditions which ever recovered a dime's worth of all this known bullion and cash which has gone down at sea. It's nice to talk and read about, but almost impossible to recover.

Why don't I write a column on treasure hunting in some magazine? I did for several years and on several other occasions certain magazines have approached me on the subject. It is a lot of work, but it is exciting and you get acquainted with lots of fine people. I did almost inaugurate a treasure column with one of the larger magazines, but they wanted to buy my soul and I'll be hanged if I'll prostitute my experiences and writing for a few dollars. Someday, if somebody comes along and lets me write facts without garnishing them with a lot of blood, lust and sex, I might just prepare a column.

What am I doing in Florida? Looking for cannonballs, armor, and other "junk."

Do I believe all of these Texas treasure tales? Not all of them, but Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico are lousy with buried treasure.

"Wul, Doc, he's been tryin' to fight Asiatic flu with Mexican tequila and it shore seems one o' them got the best of him."

Do I believe the Nazi gold tale? This pertains to approximately $5,000,000 in gold being hidden in Arizona by the Nazi Party of Germany in the late 1930's, and I do think that it is possible. In fact, I believed it enough to spend some time prowling around after it. It could be in Arizona, New Mexico, or Mexico. I think it is in Arizona, if it exists, and I am inclined to believe it exists. Can't say why, though.

What about Independence Rock? This is in Wyoming and a lot of successful digging has been going on in this area for five years. I stopped by there in October, 1957, to take pictures and a fellow from Minnesota showed me a car-trunk full of yellow stuff that would keep beans on my table for years. 'Twas kinda funny, because when I approached him he acted kinda funny and after shooting the bull for a while I identified myself and then we really got acquainted. Since then others have picked over the old Oregon Trail campgrounds in the vicinity (and there are a lot of them) and had pretty good luck. The nearby ghost towns of Atlantic City and South Pass City have coughed up some fine treasure and the old site of Ft. Stambaugh has produced some old guns, ammo, and money. You need to study Wyoming and Oregon Trail history to hunt here and you need an instrument, but it pays off.

What about Kansas? Eastern Kansas has lots of buried treasure and this has been demonstrated through the years. The Oregon, Santa Fe, and Denver Trails have their first west bound campground trails there. Several legs of the Mormon Trail are in this area. The Missouri River Valley was alive with traffic. Lots of old military posts and camps, too. So, it all adds up to lots of excitement and profit.

There are many more questions which could be answered but I know time and space do not permit it.—Karl von Mueller, 2510 Rosedale, Orlando, Florida.

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**Remembers the 101 Wild West Show**

Dear Joe,

It is with mixed emotions that I write to congratulate Madelon B. Katigan and you for publishing "The Fabulous 101."

It brings back many happy memories of my three years (1926-28) with the 101 Wild West Show—the Grand Entry, the bronc riding, the bulldogging, the sharpshooting, the oxen pulling the prairie schooner with old Kirby at the whip, the stagecoach attack with Indians galore. The Russian Cossack Riders and the trick riders. I can still hear Tex Cooper announcing, "And now from the chute comes Flying Squaw!" Flying Squaw and Dynamite were two of the famous bucking horses with the show.

I was a trick rider in those days and one of the few persons to "make the loop"—go under the horse's belly. I have had many a rope burn from the loop old Mexican Joe rolled to catch four riders abreast.

I wonder if Zack T. Miller's daughter and son remember Cowboy Bill who saddled their ponies and helped them into the seat. They were only about eight and ten years old at the time.

I had fond hopes of some day writing a novel of the three Miller brothers, about the Ranch and the Show, but somehow circumstances never placed me in the right spot at the right time. I was on my ranch in Nevada between Reno and Carson City when I read of Zack Miller's death at the home of his daughter in Austin, Texas. My heart cried again like the day Chief Eagle and I and the others stood with heads bowed when Joe Miller went to his Happy Hunting Grounds. We had just come in from what I thought was a good season and Joe had asked me and another kid if we would stay and ride fence on the ranch for forty a month and found. We had no more than settled down in the bunkhouse and had forgotten the cheers of the crowd when Joe Miller decided to leave this world forever.

You could never decipher the thoughts of Zack, even when we played poker in the dressing room of the sideshow at night, but I believe I knew him as a worried man when I nudged him and said, "Zack, it's up to you to call or raise." He would then come back to this world of realization and look at me with a lost expression and say, "It sure is, kid."

I wonder if Bill Pickett is still alive? I could never figure out why he wore a cap instead of a hat. All the time I knew him with the show I never saw him in anything but blue jeans and a jacket and cap. He was the only colored buckaroo I ever admired. His sister's son is up here in Alaska and we talk over old times as much as he remembers.

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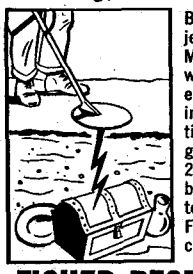

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I admired Zack T. Miller as he defended his home, the "White House," to the last. There are a lot of things I know that are sacred to the memory of the Miller brothers and will remain locked in my memory forever.

A lot of the boys who were with the 101 ended up with the movies in Hollywood. I remember seeing Tex Cooper, the oldest cowboy in Hollywood, in the New Year's parade down Sunset Strip several years ago on TV.

I look forward to the publication of each issue of TRUE WEST and wish you the success that such a magazine deserves.—Cowboy Bill Harting, 23 Marvel Trailer Court, Fairbanks, Alaska.

**Gold in Alaska**

Gentlemen:

I've become a TRUE WEST fan and want to say how much I enjoy it. It is the only magazine that I read completely from cover to cover. The fact that it is almost 100% accurate and yet invites correction makes it a valuable reference.

I could list many instances of accuracy of detail that I have noticed in TRUE WEST but will call your attention to two cases of error, oddly enough on the same page (37) in the September-October 1960 edition.

The first is in connection with the question by E. F. Dearing of Dunedin, Florida: "Who first discovered gold in Alaska?" The answer given does not answer the question at all. George W. ("Stick") Carmack, on August 17, 1896, did stake the claims that started the Klondike gold rush, but they were staked on Rabbit Creek, later named Bonanza Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River, all in Yukon Territory, CANADA, not Alaska.

If the gold in the key with which President Taft opened the Alaska Exposition in 1909 came from Carmack's claims on Bonanza Creek (which I doubt), it was not gold from Alaska. In any case Carmack's claims were by no means the first gold producers in either Yukon or Alaska.

The correct answer to Mr. Dearing's question is not so easy. The "sourdoughs" have been discussing that one for over sixty years. They held their twenty-ninth annual convention in August of this year at Berkeley, California.

The following are a few historical facts that have some bearing on this question:

A missionary, Reverend McDonald, found gold near Fort Yukon, then Russian territory, now Alaska, sometime prior to 1869.

Fine flour gold (placer) was found in Yukon Territory, Canada, in the early 1880's.

In 1883, Ed Schieffelin (the founder of the town of Tombstone, Arizona) found placer gold in Lower Ramparts, on the Yukon River, in Alaska. This is the first record that I know of, of gold being found in Alaska after it became U.S. territory.

By the middle of the 1880's quite a number of miners had gone over Chilkoot Pass and down the Yukon River and had taken out a considerable amount of gold on Stewart River and later coarse gold on the Fortymile, both in Canadian territory.

In the spring of 1887 George Williams was brought in by his Indian companion to Dyea Inlet and on his death bed there, reported an important gold strike at Fortymile.

In 1893 two halfbreeds grubstaked by Jack McQuesten found gold on Birch Creek near what became Circle City, Alaska. Within a year that area had produced nearly half-a-million dollars in gold. This was supposedly the place where the Reverend McDonald had found gold sometime prior to 1869.

In 1896 (the year that Carmack found gold on Bonanza Creek in Yukon Territory (Canada), Circle City in Alaska was already at its peak as a gold-producing center. It was a booming gold town; it had a couple of theaters, two dozen saloons, several dancehalls, etc.

So, whether we speak of gold discoveries or gold strikes, Alaska or Canada, Carmack's claims were far from the first.

The other error I noted on the same page of TRUE WEST was in connection with the "Mad Trapper" of Rat River. The answer refers to the R.N.W.M.P. and the illustration acknowledges "Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police." The case referred to took place, as stated, in the winter of 1931-32. That was some twelve years after the name of this famous force was changed (in November 1919) from Royal Northwest Mounted Police (R.N.W.M.P.) to Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.).

So much for records of the rugged past. You are doing a fine job and I wish you every success.—A. H. ("Hilt") Beamer, 1121 Gordon Ave., West Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

**Tom Pickett's Death**

Dear Sir:

I wish to correct you on the article appearing in the September-October TRUE WEST stating that Tom Pickett died and was buried in Winslow, Arizona.

In the early 30's Tom visited some of the "old-timers" here, among whom was a Navajo County lawman.

At the time Tom was here, he told his friend (the lawman) that if at any time he heard that Tom was on his death bed he wanted his friend to come to his bedside as he had a secret to divulge. Of course this revived the old legend that Pat Garrett did not kill the Kid at Ft. Sumner, New Mexico, and this was the secret Tom wanted to tell his friend.

Tom left Winslow and, as far as I know, never again visited here.

In the story "Lost Spanish Mines of the Burro Mountains" which appeared in the September-October 1959 issue of TRUE WEST the author, Leslie J. Reagan, stated that the original owners of the mines were the Incas. Had he consulted an archeologist, I think he would have found that the Incas didn't come as far north as New Mexico to work mines. It is doubtful if they ever left their native South America.

Also, in the same issue, the author of "The Fabulous Ben Thompson" stated that Ben spent some time in Pueblo, New Mexico. I wonder if his information is correct. Pueblo is a tiny farming community located on the Pecos River in San Miguel County near Las Vegas, New Mexico. When I first visited Pueblo in 1913 very few of the people spoke English, only their native tongue, Spanish. I cannot picture Ben Thompson spending any time in this quiet, off-the-beaten-track community.

Could it be that Mr. Lafferty meant that Ben had lived in Pueblo, Colorado, instead of Pueblo, New Mexico?

TRUE WEST is my favorite magazine. I regret that I didn't discover it until last year. I have been fortunate in having the opportunity to read many of



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the back numbers of the magazine.

My grandson and I eagerly await each new issue.—Mrs. R. E. Trujillo, 406 Apache Ave., Winslow, Arizona.

### The XIT Ranch of Texas

Gentlemen:—

In the Fall of 1904 I was in Amarillo, Texas. I do not remember how I got there or what I had been doing. I met a Texas boy about my own age who was returning from up north to visit his folks who lived near Canyon City. There were only two or three trains a week on the Pecos Valley R.R. running south out of Amarillo. The railroad depot was some distance from the main part of town so we slept in his bed on the depot platform until train time. We went by train to Canyon City and then by stage to his home where I stayed overnight. At his father's suggestion I went over to the wagon road the next day looking for a ride to Lubbock. I do not remember why I landed in Bovina instead.

A few days later I got a job with a surveying outfit. It was engaged in surveying XIT land for sale. There was a surveyor and his assistant, each with a buckboard and a team of harness mules. There were two mounted flagmen, of which I was one, and two chainmen. The two flagmen were also custodians of the livestock and when fresh meat was needed we picked out a suitable animal and drove it to a convenient place where it was shot. The only requirement was that we remove the hide and hang it on a fence someplace where a ranchhand would find it. The two surveyors had a tent for themselves and their maps, etc. There was a chuckwagon with a cook and a tent for the rest of us. The cook's name was Brady, a tubby little fellow who had an excellent voice and knew all the old cowboy songs. After the evening meal, when we were not too tired, we used to enjoy harmonizing.

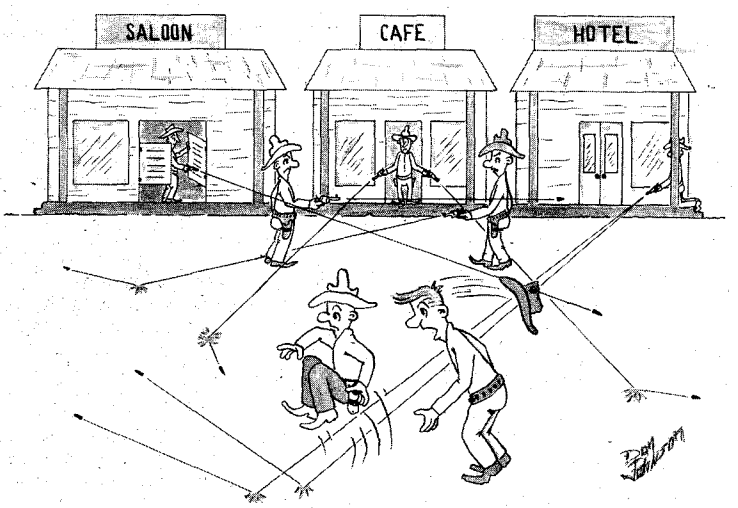
After working near Bovina for some time the surveyor was ordered to go to the New Mexico border where the railroad to Roswell crossed the line and lay out streets and building lots for a town, which subsequently became known as Farwell. Everybody worked on foot here.

Before this job was completed, however, he received further orders to proceed up to the northern end of the ranch above Dalhart.

The work done near Dalhart was the same as had been done around Bovina; the only difference was that we were frequently in sight of the Fort Worth & Denver R.R. tracks. When the stock trains began to go north I got itchy feet and quit the job to go back to Bovina, which was the main shipping point at that time.

I got a job loading cattle. I think there were five or six loading pens, maybe more. Two men worked each pen. The cowboys holding the herds near town would put thirty head of cattle into a pen. One loader would get into the pen with a bullwhip and start the cattle circling around. Then the other loader on the catwalk on the side of the pen would open the gate leading to the loading chute. With the man on the ground using the bullwhip and the one on the catwalk using a prodpole the cattle were pushed into the railroad car in short order. With very few exceptions the cars were loaded expeditiously. By the time the cars' doors were closed and empty cars spotted at the loading chutes by the trainmen, the cowboys would have a fresh bunch of cattle in the loading pens. Cattle were loaded day and night, as fast as cattle and cars could be supplied.

When and why I left there has nothing to do with the XIT Ranch. I finally landed back in Chicago, where I had old friends who had known me since childhood and where I had a few dollars cached away. I had now passed my twenty-first birthday and decided to try railroading.—Burr H. Mallory, 3 Mitchell Place, Glenridge, New Jersey.




"Now I know why they call this place Dodge City."

### Ghost Town Fan

Dear Joe:

I have been reading all the articles I could find written by Nell Murbarger. They are most interesting and educational. She seems to like to travel and locate "ghost towns," so how come there has never been an article by her on the town of Shasta, California? It's not a ghost town as a few people still live there, but it is the first town ever settled in northern California. It's on Hiway 299, about four miles this side of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Redding. Some of the roofs of the buildings are gone, but the big iron doors are still standing, with the dates, 1861-1863, on them. The original gallows that the last man was hanged on in that country is still standing. By the side of the hi-way is a small grave with iron pickets around it. It is the grave of the first child to die in that section of the country. Shasta is on the original old stagecoach route from Blue Lake to Redding, which goes through old mining towns like Whiskeytown, Buckhorn, Willow Creek, and especially Weaverville.

The town of Weaverville still has the original winding iron staircases on the outside of the buildings. It's a section of country steeped in historical and western lore. There are still a few old-timers left who could really, I believe, give Nell a good story.

Also there's the history of the war between the whites and the Chinese in the '80s when the whites killed all the Chinese miners off. It has just been recently that the town of Eureka, California, has allowed a Chinese man to come in and open up a restaurant. This history can be verified through the court record and the Humboldt *Standard* or *Times*.

The Hoopa Indian Reservation is also near Willow Creek on Hi-way 299. So Joe, couldn't you ask her about an article on the above information? I'm quite sure she would be most interested in visiting these places.

Right here on the Radcliff Ranch, we still have the deep wagon ruts where the covered wagons came through here. One section of the land by the ruts holds two stone-covered graves, and on another section about half-a-mile from the ranch house are nine rock-covered graves of people from the wagontrain. But there are no headboards on any of them. So we don't know who they were.

My husband is going to manage a ranch here this fall. So we plan on staying a couple of years and then go back to the Forks of the Salmon to our gold claim across from the old Chinese diggings and see what we can mine out. The claim is not far from where several thousand Chinese were killed and buried in one big grave. There's no marker, just a big gully now, but one old-timer has shown me the place. Very interesting country. Also an old stage stop is close by, as it originally was in the old days. —Mrs. Lester Gifford, East Star Route, Elida, New Mexico.

**Keep reading TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES! We've got more Nell Murbarger stories scheduled, including some on northern California sites! We'll write her about your suggestion.**

### Charlie Bowdre's Burial Place

Dear Friends:

I just got back from a trip to New Mexico where I go every year to Alamagordo to go on the Chamber of Commerce tour to the grave of my father, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, pioneer cattleman and nationally known author of ten books and sixty to seventy stories, all about the New Mexico cattle kingdom.

On this trip I visited my friend, Mrs. Elsa Perry, daughter of George Coe, who fought with Billy the Kid, Charlie Bowdre, Tom O'Folliard and others, in the Lincoln County cattle war.

I asked her if Charlie Bowdre was buried on the Coe Ranch, and she said, "No, Daddy (George Coe) wanted to have all three bodies, or their remains, removed from Ft. Sumner and re-interred on the Coe Ranch, but the authorities told him that he would have to get permission from the relatives of the dead men, and Daddy was not able to do that, as he had no way of knowing whom to write to."

So this is the final answer to the questions in TRUE WEST and FRONTIER TIMES about where Charlie Bowdre is buried.

I like both of these magazines very much and hope they grow bigger and better as the years go by.—Alan Rhodes, Box 254, Vestal, New York.

### Remembers Aaron Ross

Dear Mr. Small:

I was very much surprised to see my old friend Aaron Ross' picture in TRUE WEST, January-February, 1960. I worked with him for about two years; it's been a long time ago, but I think it was in 1900 and 1901, in Utah. We were handling baggage and express for Wells-Fargo. I was about nineteen. He called me "The Kid." He liked to tell me of the fighting days when he was on the road. The SP gave him a big gold watch and long chain for the hold-up out on the other side of Salt Lake. He hocked it to the depot barber for $250.00. I don't think he ever got it back.

I was from the Jackson Hole Country, so we along fine.

He doesn't look much older in this picture at ninety-three than he did when I saw him last.

Sometimes there were a few quarters of beef shipped out to the cutoff where we worked. Ross would get his knife out and cut off a chuk of meat and eat it while we were waiting for the train.

He told me he was hungry one time and ate a chunk of Indian.

I have thought of Ross many times over the years but never thought I would see his picture in a magazine.

One time I laughed at him. About thirty Greeks were lying on the green grass in the yard in front of the Wells-Fargo office and Ross was chewing on his beef when he saw them. He said "Get off the grass, you blankety-blanks. The cows will not eat it where you lay on it." And one big Greek said, "You go to Hell," and Ross said "Oh, he understands English!"

I liked Ross. I think he was a fine fellow and I was ready to back him up if anyone wanted to take over around our job.

I like your stories because they are true.—Charles Spencer, 1138 Oakland Avenue, Piedmont, California.

### Correction Confirmed

Dear Editor:

This is to confirm Mr. Sinclair's correction on the death of Little Wolf, Northern Cheyenne Chief, as printed under *Truly Western*, July-August issue. His account can be confirmed in the works of several researchers.

In the battle of Red Fork (of Powder River), November 1876, Little Wolf was shot seven times. Frank Grouard claimed that he killed him and rode over after the fighting and looked at the body. Little Wolf survived, however, and his survival and the battle scars added much to his fame.

Little Wolf was a common Indian name. For example there was a Little Wolf who was a survivor of the ill-fated Cheyenne raiding party reported in TRUE WEST, May-June, 1959, "Headless Warrior." This, undoubtedly, was the Little Wolf who as chief of the Bow String Warrior society a year later incited the Cheyennes into a revenge attack on the Kiowas and Comanches in the battle of Wolf Creek, 1838. This chief would be a Southern Cheyenne because the Bowstring society was limited to that division of the Cheyennes.

There was a Little Wolf, son of Two Thighs, killed by the Third Colorado Cavalry in the Sand Creek affair.

There were at least two Little Wolf's in the battle with Crook on the Rosebud, 1876. One was the famous Northern Cheyenne chief. The second was a Sioux; the latter lost his life in this fight.

It is extremely difficult to trace early-day Indian warriors unless they can be closely associated with a specific battle, village, warrior society, etc. Names were changed. For example, the Northern Cheyenne Little Wolf was called Two Tails in his youth. He, in turn, gave his name to his favorite nephew. This meant that there were at least two Little Wolf's fighting during the remarkable escape of the Northern Cheyennes from Indian Territory and their successful but tragic return to their home on the northern plains.—Charles S. McCammon, 1851 Pryor Lane, Billings, Montana.

### Barbed Wire Inventor

Dear Sir:

I think there may be an error somewhere as to one of the inventors of barbed wire listed in the article, "From Split Rails to Barbed Wire." You say it is Joseph F. Glidden.

In the spring of 1900, I was sixteen and began sailing on the Great Lakes where there was a small wooden steamship flying the Great Lakes named "The John F. Glidden." It was said to have been named after the barbed wire inventor. I was also on the steamship, W.D. Rees in the summer of 1903 when we saw the John F. Glidden sink when the barge Magna cut her almost in two when the suction of another steamer pulled the Glidden over on its side in the Lake St. Clair Ship Canal. All the crew scrambled to safety but the Glidden sank. They did not attempt repairs, but merely destroyed her in order to clear the channel.

But, the main thing I'm interested in is the first name. Your article says Joseph and the ship was John.

Isaac Elwood was also mentioned by having a ship named after him. This name was correct but I can't help wonder if it is John or Joseph—E. A. Sigler, Box 17, Livingston, Montana.

### "Not Dead—Just Asleep!"

Dear Sirs:

I wish to make a comment on "He Guards the Ghosts," by Nell Murbarger in your April issue of TRUE WEST magazine. It was an excellent word picture of White Oaks as it is today. The only thing wrong with it: the town is not really dead—just asleep. Though the old breed of the gold and silver prospector is gone, the modern counterpart is sniffing at his heelprints in time and finding fabulous minerals unheard of by him. Modern transportation, modern techniques, and "know-how" are being put to use to awaken this sleeping mining town and in the very near future it will bloom like a rose in the springtime. The "rush" will be on.—Msg. Joseph McDonald, Warminister, Pennsylvania.



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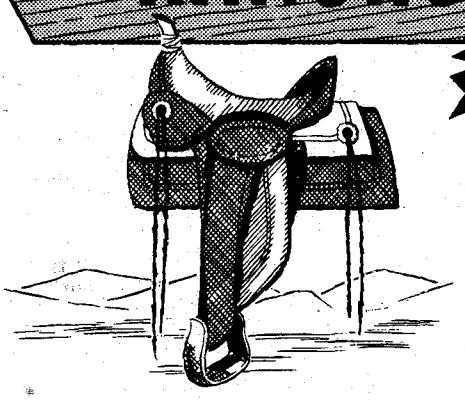

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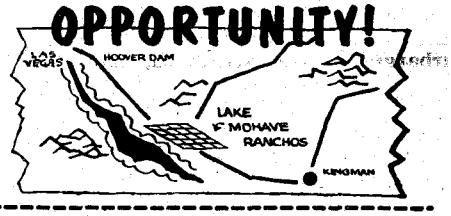


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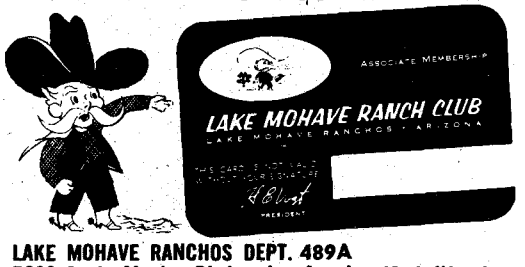


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MINT CONDITION TRUE WEST 1-42 for sale, $300. Mint set complete FRONTIER TIMES, $50. Leo Schumaker, Box 931, Kissimmee, Florida.

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# WESTERN BOOK ROUNDUP

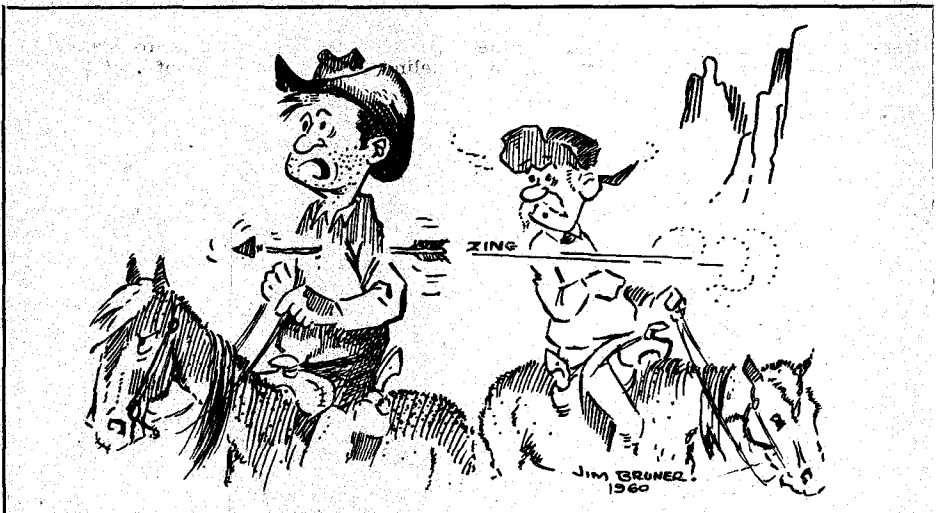
**By The Old Bookaroos**

### INDIAN FIGHTING ARMY

*Great Western Indian Fights* (Doubleday, $4.95) is the first of a series of *Great Western* books to be issued by the Potomac Corral, The Westerners, Washington, D. C. The twenty-five chapters were written by twenty-one members of the Corral. Each fight included in this book was of particular importance in the development of the West and the author was especially interested in and familiar with the site of his battle. For example, Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico wrote about the battle of Canyon De Chelly that ended the depredations by the Navajos during the Civil War. Bob Utley, vice-president of the Historical Society of New Mexico, was a ranger-historian at the Custer Battlefield National Monument several summer vacations during his college years—quite naturally he chose the Battle of Little Big Horn. J. A. Leermakers studied and photographed the Rosebud battleground on a vacation trip and wrote a great chapter about the fighting there. Congressman O. Clark Fisher of Texas chose a highly dramatic battle between the Texas Rangers and the Comanches that occurred in his Congressional District. Noel Loomis, past president of the Western Writers of America; Captain Jack Riddle of the U. S. Army and the Denver Post; Harper Simms, Director of the Information Division, Soil Conservation Service; and the three Old Bookaroos are among the other Corral members who wrote chapters. The book contains sixteen pages of halftones, twelve maps, numerous small line drawings, a rather comprehensive bibliography, brief biographical sketches of each of the authors, and an index. Even if we are slightly prejudiced, we think you will find this book highly entertaining and very informative.

*Following the Indian Wars* (University of Oklahoma Press, $5.95) by Oliver Knight, formerly a newspaperman and now a teacher of journalism, is a highly entertaining book about the accredited correspondents during our Indian Wars. The practice of sending reporters with the troops originated in this country during the Mexican War and the art was perfected during the Civil War. However, even the experienced correspondents found something new in both the fighting and in getting their stories to their papers while serving wih the Indian Fighting Army. Such well known reporters as Henry M. Stanley (he found Dr. Livingstone), John F. Finerty (author of *War-Path and Bivouac*), Dr. Beneville R. Keim (author of *Sheridan's Troopers on the Border*) and Mark Kellogg (he died with Custer) are included. But the author has performed a signal service to the students of the Indian Wars by providing comprehensive coverage of the men who reported the various campaigns. We meet Joe Wasson who accompanied Crook on his western campaign in 1867 and later to the Rosebud; Edward Fox of the New York *Herald* who covered the Modoc War; Robert E. Strahorn of the *Rocky Mountain News* who was one of several reporters at the Rosebud and remained with Crook, winter and summer, until Crazy Horse surrendered; soldier of fortune James J. O'Kelly of the New York *Herald* who accompanied Terry along with "Phocion" Howard of the Chicago *Tribune* and cub C. S. Diehl of the Chicago *Times* (later head of the Associated Press) and many others.

There is a good bibliography, an index, a few illustrations and some well done maps. Recommended.




"Are you shore we ain't in Indian country yet?"



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### READIN' HISTORY

*The New Texas Reader* (Naylor, $4.95) edited by G. Stanley Banks and Grace T. McMillan isn't so new. With the exception of a brief extract from Ed Eilman's *Cannibal Coast* (San Antonio, 1959) it contains much the same material that the 1947 edition did. The book is greatly improved in format, however —a stouter cloth binding and better paper makes this a much more desirable volume even if you could find a copy of the first printing (now long out of print and scarce). This is a historical miscellany of considerable value—all the material in it formerly appeared in Naylor's *Epic-Century* Magazine. J. Frank Dobie, Chris Emmett, Boyce House and Stark Young are among the writers and there are twelve full-page drawings by Ralph Pereida.

### PANHANDLE BOYHOOD

This past year Lewis Nordyke went home to his Maker, but fortunately before he died he had written the nostalgic story of his boyhood on his father's Texas Panhandle farm. The story, *Nubbin Ridge,* has been posthumously printed by Doubleday & Company, ($3.95).

The Nordykes were an affectionate clan that wrested a precarious living from a reluctant land plagued frequently by ought, dust, blizzards, boll weevils, ail and tornadoes. They cherished the simple pleasures of country life like possum hunting at night and hopping at Nubbin Ridge sociables where Grandpa Nordyke fiddled and encouraged local merrymaking. Young Nordyke enjoyed a host of activities that modern children never have a chance to know—like some old-fashioned religion stirred up by an itinerant preacher, bedding down at night by the campfire in an old-time wagon yard and investigating haunted houses on abandoned dry farms.

Newspaper columnist Nordyke wrote much about West Texas history including his informative books, *Cattle Empire, Great Roundup, John Wesley Hardin* and *The Truth About Texas.*

### RAILROAD BUILDER

James H. Kyner's *End of Track* (University of Nebraska Press, $1.60) is a paperback reprint of a Caxton book issued in 1937 when it was awarded the gold medal of the Oregon Trail Memorial Association as a "significant and thrilling biography of a pioneer railroad builder." There is a new introduction and notes by James C. Olson in this *Bison Book* edition. Kyner landed his first contract in 1881 (a twenty-five mile branch line of the Union Pacific in the Loup Valley in Nebraska) and later constructed parts of the Oregon Short Line; Denver, South Park and Pacific; Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley (bought by the Northwestern); Colorado Midland; Denver and Rio Grande; and the Burlington. His last major job was a cut in Wyoming to permit the relocation of the mainline of the U. P. Kyner wrote primarily about construction problems and how he solved them. In doing so, he made a solid contribution in an almost virgin field of railroad history. A bargain.

*Narrative of an Expedition* (Ross and Haines, ($8.75) by William H. Keating is a scholarly record of Major Stephen H. Long's Second Expedition covering the upper Ohio, Mississippi and Red River Valleys and along the northern Great Lakes region. The report of members of this extraordinary expedition has become a prime source of historical information on Sioux and Chippeway tribes in the upper Midwest.

Corruption of the Indians already was well along its course, but on the whole, the expedition found them affable, generous and kind hosts. Keating devoted considerable space to denunciation of a class of whites who were demoralizing the natives with liquor and knavery.

Perhaps one of the great contributions to ethnological research in those times was that of Keating and his fellows in their studies of the Algonquian and Siouan races, particularly Chippeway and Sioux. The facts about these historical tribes in this book are so comprehensive and detailed as to almost challenge the need for further study.

This is in a limited edition of 1,500 copies.

### RANGE LIFE

*70 Years A Cowboy* (privately printed by the author, T. B. Long, P. O. Box 1051, Malta, Montana, $2.50) is the author's candid account of his ranching experiences in southern Canada and northern Montana. There are excellent details about the day to day jobs that hard working, gritty cowboys and their wives did as a matter of course. They survived Indian troubles and made it through cold weather and droughts but eventually the dry farmers ate up the prairie and forced the ranchers back to hills and badlands too steep, rough or dry for the plowman.

Long says there were no T. V. type cowboys on his range. They had a few tough customers but most cattlemen were gentlemen and solid citizens. He carried a six-gun most of his life but never drew against a man except in line of duty as a posseman. There's spectacular tattle on bronc breaking, country rodeos, killing blizzards and drifting cattle. T. B. operated several Montana ranches as manager or foreman. Many ranches, cowboys and ranchmen are named in his booklet.

This is top grade autobiography about a vanishing race.

*The Range Cattle Industry—Ranching on the Great Plains* (University of Oklahoma Press, $4) by Edward Everett Dale has been reprinted from the 1930 edition to meet the popular demand for this factual playback of the western cattle history.

Long a key reference on Great Plains cattle history, the book presents authentic material on development of cattle ranches from Texas to Canada; it delineates the routes of cattle trails through the heart-land of America; it describes the wild and woolly cattle towns like Abilene, Dodge, and Ellsworth.

The cowboys who herded the cattle north over snaking trails have become America's legendary heroes; those who wintered with the cattle at the end of the northern trail learned to buck a climate that killed tender men. Some of them stayed and built the northern cattle industry.

As the cornbelt exploded into a farming paradise, the cattle from the Great Plains found a hungry market on the properous Middlewest farms adjacent to stockyards and packing plants that supplied the growing eastern beef demands.

There are numerous maps, charts and illustrations that add much to the book that must be a staple item in all libraries on cattle, grazing and early American history.


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## Miscellaneous

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AUTHENTIC INDIAN SONGS AND DANCES on Phonograph Records—Catalogue on request from Canyon Records, 834 N. 7th Avenue, Phoenix 2, Arizona.

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*The Humor of the American Cowboy* (Signet, 50c) was compiled by Stan Hoig and issued in hard covers in 1958 by Caxton of Caldwell. The author has done a good job of collecting the yarns of a similar type into chapters with such intriguing titles as "Laugh Kills Lonesome," "Law Without Order," and "Parlor Sittin'." J. Frank Dobie, Charlie Russell, Jack Thorp, Edward Everett Dale, and Ramon Adams are among the many tall tale tellers represented in this book. With this kind of source material it would have been hard for Hoig to miss. He didn't and Nick Eggenhofer added some good drawings—this is a big four-bits worth.

*Beef Production and Distribution* (University of Oklahoma Press, $5) by Herrell De Graff crystallizes the changes in patterns of marketing, processing and merchandising beef that have occurred in the last dozen years. Its objective analyses of past and probable future fluctuations in the troublesome and ever present cattle cycle, with accompanying evaluation of price stabilization proposals, will be invaluable to the producer in making quicker and therefore smaller adjustment.

There are many tables, illustrative charts, pictures and good descriptive writing that livens what might have been a powder-dry statistical text.

### HIGH ADVENTURE

*My Sixty Years on the Plains* (University of Oklahoma Press, $2) by W. T. Hamilton is Volume 15 in The Western Frontier Library. The first edition of this book was issued in 1905—the author was eighty-two when he wrote it. It is an account of high adventure in the West that is gone. Bill Hamilton was twenty and sickly when he left St. Louis in 1842 with a band of free trappers led by William S. (Old Bill) Williams and George Perkins. Young Hamilton was an apt pupil and his mentors among the most experienced of the Mountain Men. He trapped, traded and fought Indians and while nearly all this book is about the period 1842-1858, Hamilton lived out his life in the West. He was a great admirer of Old Bill Williams and his recollections add considerably to our knowledge of the 1842-1845 doings of that famous trapper, trader and guide. Bill Hamilton was one of the great "sign talkers" and was able to communicate with all of the Indian tribes he met. There is much on Washakie, Chief of the Shoshones, a great friend of the white men, and of the customs and mores of his tribe. The six great Charles M. Russell illustrations that enhanced the first edition did not reproduce well on the paper used in this book. There is an introduction by Donald J. Berthrong of the history faculty of the University of Oklahoma. He forgives Bill Hamilton for some inaccuracies (perhaps due to a time-dimmed memory) and it is well that he does—this is a highly entertaining narrative and a bargain.

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## Battle on Bear River

*(Continued from page 17)*

and caught up with the first division the following night. Finding them bivouacked for the night, he ordered them forward without further delay.

By forced marches, enduring extreme hardships without complaint, the combined forces found themselves in a position to attack the Indian village at dawn on January 29.

HAVING BEEN warned of the approach of the troops, the Indians had ample opportunity to strengthen their defensive position. Confident of victory, they made no attempt to move their families to safety but elected to fight in the vicinity of their village which occupied a ravine about forty feet wide and six to twelve feet deep, approximately a mile north of the river.

To the front of the Indian position was a wide, level, treeless plain, offering no protection or cover for the soldiers. To the Indians' left, the ravine was protected by a few low hills. To the right, the ravine opened out toward the river.

Down in the ravine the Indians had interwoven the heavy growth of live willows into barricades, impossible for cavalry to penetrate and affording concealment for hidden sharpshooters.

The bank of the ravine fronting the treeless plain was undercut by steps leading to wall niches where the Indians could fire on the soldiers without exposing themselves to return fire.

The defensive position was so artfully prepared that it rendered cavalry movement almost impossible. Consequently the engagement was fought almost entirely on foot by the combatants of both sides.

With dawn approaching Colonel Connor sent Major McGarry forward with the cavalry to prevent any escape of the hostiles, in case they chose to make the attempt. Colonel Connor remained with the infantry to give them their final instructions before hurrying on to join the cavalry.

When Major McGarry arrived at the field, he deployed his men to advance toward the Indian position. The Indians, at this time, were out in front of the ravine, waving lances with dangling scalps, shouting and gesturing insults at the oncoming soldiers. Their favorite shouted phrase was, "Fours right, fours left: come on you California s-o-b's!"

The sons of California accepted the challenge and came on steadily, whereupon the Indians took refuge behind the bank of the ravine and opened fire on the mounted men. The white losses rose rapidly because of their not being able to return an effective fire from horseback. Major McGarry ordered his men to dismount and advance as skirmishers, while the number four men led the horses to the rear.

Colonel Conner, arriving on the scene, quickly saw that the direct frontal assault would prove too costly and ordered Major McGarry with part of his men to outflank the Indians on their left, preventing their escape to the hills in that direction.

Turning back to observe the progress of his infantry, Connor could see that they were stalled south of the ford, prevented from crossing by the deep, slush-ice laden waters of the river. He ordered the horse holders of the idle cavalry mounts back to ferry the infantry across the ford. When the foot soldiers arrived, Connor dispatched more men to the aid of Major McGarry with orders for him to advance down the ravine, flushing out the hostile warriors as he went.

With the increased pressure of the advancing soldiers, Indians began to emerge from the mouth of the ravine, plunging into the icy waters of the river in an attempt to escape. Colonel Connor then sent a detachment of mounted men across the river to fire upon the Indians in the water.

When the firepower of the enemy had been reduced, Connor sent his infantry forward in a frontal attack on the ravine. Some of the infantrymen reached the mouth opening on the river and advanced up the ravine, closing the last door to any escape for the hostile warriors.

Hemmed in on all sides, there was but one course remaining for the Indians and that was to sell their lives as dearly as possible. It was a no-quarter fight, none being asked nor expected by either side. The warriors who had so often refused mercy to the victims of their raids now found the avengers also without mercy.

The fight which had been fairly even before the soldiers closed the ends of the ravine became a grim, hand-to-hand struggle. Advancing up and down the ravine, the soldiers were fired upon by Indian marksmen hidden behind the willow barricades. However, the Indians' individual courage could not hold out against the disciplined organization of the soldiers. Fighting, shooting, clubbing their way from one resistance pocket to the next, the Californians soon met in the ravine and the battle was over.

The fight had begun at six in the morning and had lasted for a period of four hours. The Indian loss ranged from an ultra-conservative official report 224 to an unofficial high of over 400. Those who visited the field counted over 300 bodies and stated that in some places the dead were piled eight deep.

Colonel Connor had fourteen men killed, four officers and forty-nine men wounded. Of the wounded, one officer and five enlisted men died later. Seventy-five men had their feet frozen and as a result some were crippled for life.

As for the Bannocks, they had again followed their usual custom of being few in number but large in influence. The Northern Utah Shoshones had borne the brunt of the battle and suffered the heaviest casualties. However, after the battle the Bannocks were not so enthusiastic about raiding on the Overland route, nor did they receive the support they had formerly had from the neighboring tribes.

In the words of the times, "The battle with the Shoshones and Bannocks on Bear River was the severest and most bloody of any which has ever occurred with the Indians west of the Mississippi. It struck terror into the hearts of savages hundreds of miles away from the battlefield."

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Sworn to and Subscribed before me this 13th day of September, 1960.

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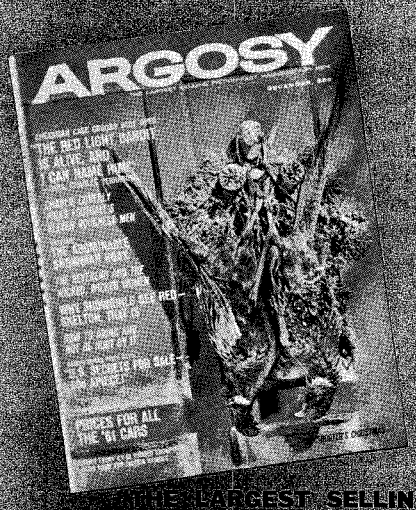


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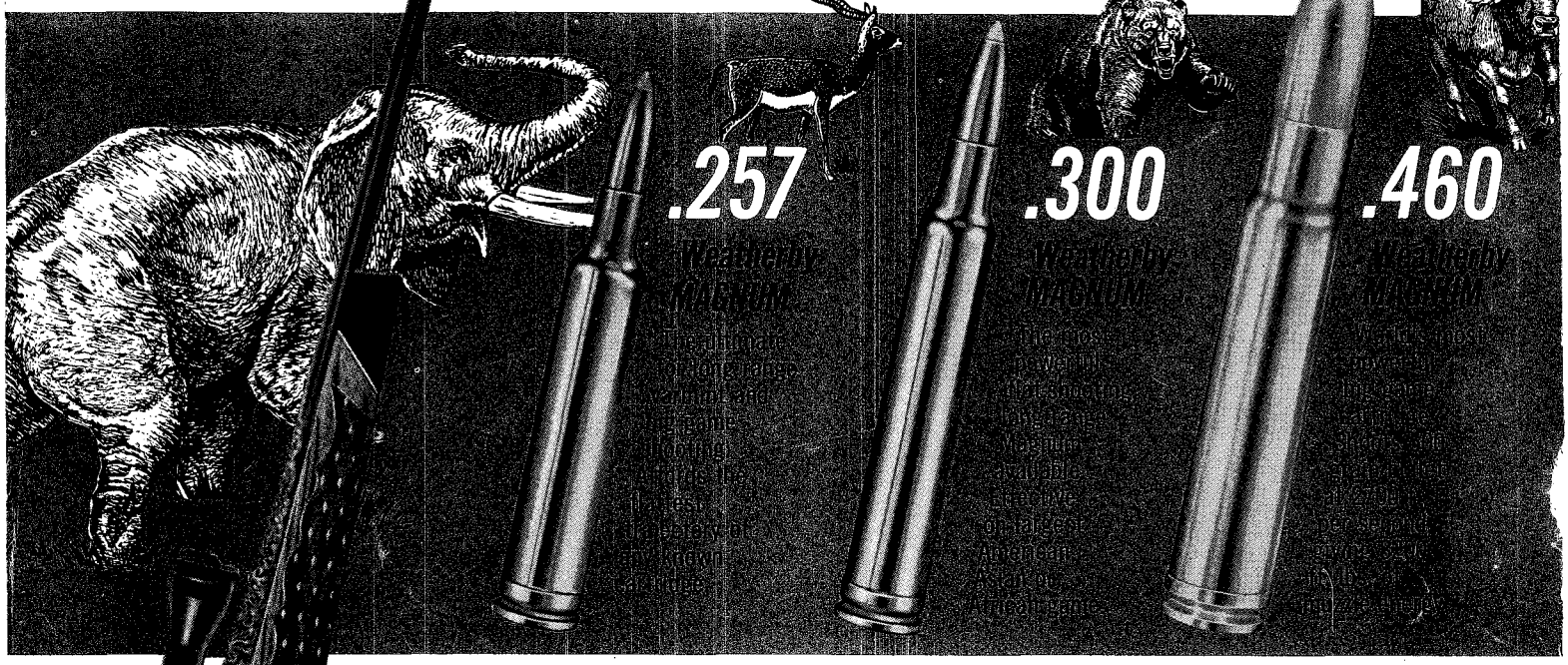


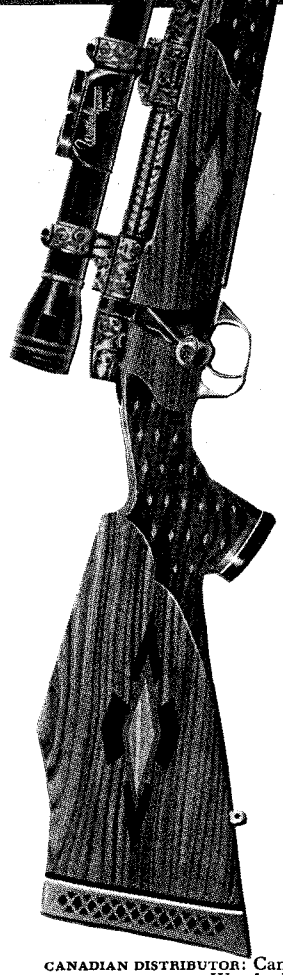

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| | | Muzzle | 100 yds. | 200 yds. | 300 yds. | Muzzle | 100 yds. | 200 yds. | 300 yds. | 200 yds. | 300 yds. | 400 yds. |
| .257 Weatherby | 100 gr. | 3700 | 3400 | 3100 | 2810 | 3040 | 2562 | 2129 | 1753 | 0.7 | 3.3 | 7.5 |
| .264 Magnum | 100 gr. | 3700 | 3260 | 2880 | 2550 | 3040 | 2360 | 1840 | 1440 | 1.6 | 4.2 | 8.3 |
| .300 Weatherby | 180 gr. | 3350 | 3115 | 2895 | 2685 | 4477 | 3882 | 3361 | 2892 | 1.0 | 3.9 | 7.5 |
| .338 Magnum | 200 gr. | 3000 | 2690 | 2410 | 2170 | 4000 | 3210 | 2580 | 2090 | 2.4 | 6.0 | N.A. |
| .460 Weatherby | 500 gr. | 2725 | 2480 | 2240 | 2025 | 8245 | 6830 | 5570 | 4550 | 2.0 | 7.0 | 13.3 |
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